

BT810 .G73 1834

Graham, Mary Jane,
1803-1830.

Freeness and sovereignty of
God's justifying and
electing grace /

Presented by
Rev. A. G. Winchester

[Faint handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.]





JUSTIFYING AND ELECTING GRACE.

Philadelphia:
Printed by James Kay, Jun. & Co.
Race above 4th Street.

G. W. Musgrave.

THE FREENESS AND SOVEREIGNTY
OF GOD'S JUSTIFYING AND
ELECTING GRACE.

BY
MARY JANE GRAHAM,

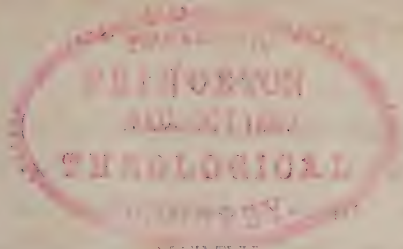
LATE OF STOKE FLEMING, DEVON.

FIRST AMERICAN FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

J. WHETHAM, 22 SOUTH FOURTH STREET.

1834.



PREFACE.

MANY plain persons, who have not time to read long treatises, or to enter into the intricacies of controversy, entertain doubts upon some of the leading doctrines of the gospel, and suffer those doubts to remain unsatisfied, either because they deem the subject unprofitable, or think they have not time for its investigation. No subject, however, can justly be deemed unprofitable, a right knowledge of which is essential either to our eternal salvation, or to the comfort and consistency of our Christian walk.

I believe the doctrine of free justifying grace to belong to the former class of subjects ; that of sovereign electing grace to the latter. Every person who has time to read his Bible, and to pray over it, may obtain a clear and experi-

mental knowledge of these truths ; and to assist him in doing so, is the object of the following pages. And for the comfort of those who are members of the Church of England, the Author has, on every subject, brought the words of that church forward to prove how strictly they agree with the Scripture statement of that subject. Not that any single doctrine can be either proved or disproved from the Service and Articles of our Church, but that having examined the doctrine by Scripture, it is satisfactory to find our Church bearing her testimony to the truth of what the Scripture says.

May the Lord the Spirit, without whom not one word can be written or read to any good purpose, bless both the writer and reader of this little treatise, with such a spiritual understanding of His word, as may enable them, with one mind and one mouth, to glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE
AMERICAN EDITION.

MISS GRAHAM, the author of the following treatise, was truly a remarkable young woman. She has been called away from the church militant to the church triumphant, in the flower of life, and in the midst of a career which promised to be one of great usefulness, and of no less distinction in the Christian world than that of the late lamented Hannah More.

But the ways of a wise Providence are inscrutable: and however we may lament her early departure, it is our part to submit to the dispensation and adore the Dispenser.

The theme on which she discourses in the following pages, is one of inconceivable grandeur and glory, no less than of interest and moment to our ruined race,—“THE FREENESS AND SOVEREIGNTY OF GRACE:” a subject which angels delight to study, without being able fully to comprehend; a subject which, from its bearing upon our destiny, should command devout and universal consideration.

The freeness of grace cheers, encourages, and rejoices the smitten heart of the penitent, while its “sovereignty” awes him into profound adoration, and elevates his soul to loud and lofty praises.

The mind of Miss Graham seems to have been highly favoured with clear and correct conceptions of gospel truth; and her soul to have been deeply imbued with its spirit. It may appear extravagant to say that she wrote as with a sun-beam, but the devout reader, divested of prejudice, and unbiassed by erroneous views of gospel truth, will *feel* that she wrote

as if she had dipped her pen into the fountain of light. He will be delighted with the lucid exposition of the texts she quotes, and cannot fail to mark the aptness as well as multiplicity of her scripture proofs. Paucity of scripture quotation most commonly characterizes those works and discourses which inculcate error. This indeed we naturally and reasonably expect.

This little book may be hailed as a seasonable production in this day of error and latitudinarianism : a period which, in history, will be marked by the revival, under a new aspect and name, of long since condemned and exploded heresies. The wisdom and the venom of the old serpent are equally discoverable in this masterpiece of unholy policy, by which souls are deluded and destroyed. The enemy does not confine himself to the ranks of avowed infidelity, but sacrilegiously intrudes upon holy ground. Clothed as an angel of light, he appears within the walls of Zion, that he may

the more effectually seduce and ruin the victims of a miscalled charity, and of a false liberality.

Errors are linked together. The adoption of one *naturally*, though, happily for the church, not *invariably* leads to all the rest: not invariably, because some do not discover the connection between those embraced and those repudiated. And it is a favourable circumstance that God stays them in their downward course, and permits them to remain inconsistent advocates of truth, rather than consistent promulgators of error.

The candid inquirer after truth is indeed surrounded by rocks and shoals, on which those who launch into forbidden speculations, are almost sure to make shipwreck: but Miss Graham seems to have avoided these extremes, and by faith and prayer to have attained the desired haven.

She was a diligent and prayerful student of the Bible, and although accused of deriving her

theological views from "Calvin's Institutes," yet, at the time she formed her opinions, she had never read them. The Bible was the source whence she derived her views. She resorted to the fountain of truth, and it would be well for the church, if those who boast discoveries in theology would imitate her example. The accordance of Miss Graham's views with those of a system so much decried, and as little understood, greatly serves to establish the correctness and preciousness of that system.

This little book has doubtless been the means of strengthening the faith, and of encouraging the hopes of many humble believers in the transatlantic church, it having in a short space of time reached its second edition there. And we may confidently hope for similar blessings from its perusal by American Christians.

It is not only worthy a place on every Christian's parlour table, and in his sacred oratory, but it is especially recommended as suitable

for a Sunday school library. And although its sentiments are worthy of being transcribed in letters of gold, yet they are far more worthy of being cherished in our memories and practised in our lives.

Philadelphia, August 1834.

THE FREENESS,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON ORIGINAL SIN.

AN obscure or imperfect view of one doctrine often leads to the rejection of another. Thus I have always found, that those who conscientiously reject the doctrine of election, do so from an inability to take into the account, the absolutely free and unconditional nature of God's grace in pardoning sinners; and I believe the clearness of our views of this latter doctrine to be, in most cases, commensurate with our deep and abiding conviction of man's utter and original depravity.

This may happen to real Christians. A person may see enough of the sin of his heart

and life, to come heartily to Christ for salvation ; and yet he may not be so deeply convinced of his entire ruin in the fall, and of the desperate wickedness and utter helplessness of his nature from the very womb, as to perceive the justice, or even the necessity of the doctrine of election.

Yet a very clear conviction of our natural enmity against God, and of our entire inability to seek or to choose any thing that is good, plainly involves with it a conviction that if we love God, it must be because He *first* loved us ; that if we choose Christ and his ways at all, it can be ascribed to no other cause than that He *first* chose us,—or in other words, that we are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God.

Such being my view of the case, I entreat my reader's attention while I say a few words on the doctrine of original sin. It is the very first lesson in the school of Christ ; and it is only by being well rooted and grounded in these first principles, that we can hope to go on to perfection. The doctrine is written in Scripture as with a sun-beam. If we do not feel some conviction of it in our own hearts, it affords a

sad proof that we still belong to that “ generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.”* “ All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits.”† With *Him* a high look, and a proud heart, an idle word, and a light thought is sin. His law is spiritual, reaching to every thought and intent of the heart. “ Who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”‡

If then we say that we have *no* sin, we make God a liar; but if we allow that we *sin at all*, then must we allow that *our whole nature* is sinful and corrupt. At least our Saviour thought so. He declares that corrupt fruit only can come from a corrupt tree: corrupt doings of a corrupt nature. “ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”§ As if our blessed Saviour had said: ‘ Be consistent; either say at once that ye know no sin, or if indeed conscience witnesses that ye do sin every day, and every hour of your lives, then confess that your corrupt doings proceed from a nature inherently

* Prov. xxx. 12.

† Prov. xvi. 2.

‡ James ii. 10.

§ Matt. vii. 18.

corrupt. If your nature were a good, a holy nature, it could not be thus continually putting forth the evil fruit of unholy actions. The clusters that bow down the branches of the vine may become less luxuriant, but still they are grapes; no change of season or of climate can cause it to teem with the unsightly fruit of the bramble, or the tasteless berries of the thorn. Look then no longer for any thing good in yourselves; it is to look for grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles. Once I had planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed; but now are ye turned to the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me. The parent stock became corrupt, and spread corruption through all its branches. One only hope remains for you. Confess your sin and misery, and seek to be grafted, contrary to nature, into me the true vine: thus abiding in me, and I in you, ye who in yourselves can do nothing, shall in me bear much and good fruit.' The fountain of humanity has been poisoned at its very head, and will bring forth nothing but pollution: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;"* out of it flow,

* Jer. xvii. 9.

as from their natural source, evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, and all that train of corruptions mentioned by our Lord in Mark vii. 21, 22. “ Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? Why callest thou me good ? There is none good but one, that is God.”* These words of our Lord again seem to imply, ‘ Be consistent ; either admit that I am God, or if you will have it that I am but a mere man like yourself, then ascribe no goodness to me ; for know, that in man dwelleth no good thing. “ Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things ? I tell you nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” ’† “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh.‡ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.”§ Why so ? Because “ the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”|| O how the very opinions of men on this subject prove the depth of their blindness and perverseness : that they will persist in saying, “ I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of

* Mark. x. 17. † Luke xiii. 2, 3.

‡ John iii. 6. § Rom. viii. 8.

|| Rom. viii. 7.

nothing :” when He who tried the heart and reins has affirmed of them, that they are “wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.”*

The Scripture history of man opens with these words, “And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image ; in the image of God created he him.”† “God is a spirit ;”‡ it must, therefore, have been in his spiritual image that man was created. In holiness, in happiness, in knowledge, such as become his state,—in these things, man resembled his Maker.

Now, it is very remarkable, that after the fall, we are expressly told, that “Adam begat a son in his own likeness after his image,”§ that is, as unlike the original holy image of God as darkness is to light, or corruption to incorruption. For would we ascertain from the mouth of God himself, what man was then like, let us go a chapter or two further, and we shall find the Lord looking down upon his ruined creation, upon those things which his hand

* Rev. iii. 17.

† Gen. i. 25, 27.

‡ John iv. 24.

§ Gen. v. 3.

made, and which he had once pronounced to be very good.

Now “ God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth ;* and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”† Can the Spirit of truth testify of our character in plainer or in stronger terms ?

But lest those who resist even the Spirit when his words would convince them of sin, should object that this description is only applied to the wicked generation that was swept away by the flood, God has provided against this subterfuge.

The windows of heaven are stopped ; the rain from heaven is restrained ; the waters return from off the earth ; and the ark rests upon the mountains of Ararat. Eight chosen persons, the remains of the once countless multitude, come forth from this hiding-place of the Lord’s providing, and join together in a sacrifice of thanksgiving which rises up as a sweet-smelling

* Gen. vi. 12. † Gen. vi. 5.

savour before God.* Let us pause a moment to see what we can collect from Scripture concerning the persons who knelt around the family altar. One of them is cited as a pattern of holiness throughout the Old and New Testament. We learn but little of his three sons: yet an act of filial piety is recorded of two of them which, together with the blessing of their inspired father, mark them, in our esteem, for holy men. Nothing is told us concerning their wives: yet we may not unfairly suppose, that out of this little female remnant there would be some who, like their husbands and father, walked with God. So that we have here eight persons, of whom we know that *three* were good; and we know only of *one* who was wicked. Now it was *upon this very occasion* in which the sweet savour of this very sacrifice was ascending before God, that he said, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."† What, *still evil*? Still does the Holy Ghost bear his testimony against man? Yet not one of all that rebellious generation

* Gen. viii. 20, 21.

† Gen. viii. 21.

remains. Mankind is reduced to an exceeding small compass. Never has the earth been so purified. Never since has it contained so select an assembly as that which we are now considering. Yet still—still the character of man is thus given *by Him who cannot lie*. “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth:”—the heart of the righteous Noah, no less than that of the ungodly Ham: for had there been an exception in so small a circle, the Judge of the whole earth would not have included them all in the same sweeping accusation. Moreover, he declares that the heart of man *will be always evil*: for that is the very reason he gives, why he will curse the ground no more for man’s sake. He does not say, ‘I will not do it again, because they will improve—their hearts will grow better;’ but ‘I will do so no more, *because the heart of man is evil from his youth.*’ Not all the waters of the flood can wash out the guilty stain which Adam has entailed upon his children—not all the waters of the flood can cleanse the earth, so long as one of Adam’s sin-defiled race shall remain upon its surface. And to this day, if we had no other witness to testify against us

that our hearts are evil; yet have we an accusing monitor in the clouds, even the bow of the covenant which God has set there for a sign to us, that he will not in *our* days bring the waters to cover the earth; because the imaginations of the thoughts of *our* hearts are *evil—only* evil—*evil continually—evil from our youth*. The Hebrew word rendered imaginations is, as we learn from the marginal notes, much stronger than the interpretation conveys an idea of, since it signifies the whole intents, purposes, and desires of the heart.

Would we know the *reason* of this indelible pollution, which fallen man has transmitted to his latest descendants? let that given by Scripture suffice—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."* But is not the newborn babe innocent? Yes, from the commission of actual sin, but not from the pollution of a nature altogether sinful; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."† Why then is death so often commissioned to snatch away the babe in the first hour of its

* Job xiv. 4.

† Rom. v. 12.

existence?—why, but because that babe is a sinful creature? Sin, that root of bitterness, has already shot its fibres into the inmost soul. That infant “born of the flesh, is flesh”* and “as such cannot please God”†—cannot bring forth any other than the accursed fruits of the flesh. As surely as the cockatrice’ egg will hatch into a viper, so surely will the babe born of unclean parents, be itself unclean;—so surely it will be “by nature a child of wrath, even as others.”‡ And therefore it is as the Apostle tells us, that, “Death reigneth over all, even over all them that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”§ I entertain not a doubt that these little ones are redeemed by the blood of Jesus; but that they *need* redemption, that they are *sinner*s, children of wrath by nature,—of this truth I am equally well assured, and every little mound in the church-yard seems to have a voice that tells me so.

The baptism of infants is a striking recognition of their ruined and sinful state by nature;

* John iii. 6. † Rom. viii. 8.

‡ Ephes. ii. 3. § Rom. v. 14.

for what is baptism but a sign of the washing away of the filth of our polluted nature? The Church service on this, as well as most other points, is irresistibly plain and convincing. In the baptism of *infants*, the priest thus begins his exhortation. ‘Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin; I beseech you to call on God the Father, that of his bounteous mercy, he may grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have.’ Again, ‘We call upon thee for this infant, that he coming into thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration. O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him.’

Let not any one so far misunderstand me as to suppose that I think baptism is any thing more than the *outward sign* of regeneration, or the washing away of the filth of the flesh: though I believe that if with our Church we carry little children *in faith* to Jesus, we have every reason to hope that he will receive them in his arms, and bless them with the inward grace. But my object here is solely to point out

how our Church in the baptism of infants, acknowledges the doctrine of original sin.

The Holy Ghost has instructed the Apostle to give us such a full comment upon the spiritual death we all die in Adam, that we cannot too often read and pray over the following passages, Rom. v. 12, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45, 49. Ephes. iv. 22, 24. Col. iii. 9, 10; there are many others in which our nature in Adam is spoken of, in contradistinction to the new and holy nature we receive in Christ Jesus. So essential is a right understanding of this truth, that until we receive it, many of the most beautiful parts of the Church service must appear just as unintelligible to us as if they were written in an unknown language. Nay, worse than unintelligible, they must seem extremely foolish and ridiculous. How absurd (to an understanding not convinced of the original defilement of our nature) must it appear to talk of remitting an infant's sins; of causing the old Adam to be buried, and his carnal affections to die in him; while all the time the hearer thinks that the infant as yet has *no* sins, *no* carnal affections,—while the very existence

of the old Adam, or original sin is doubted by him !

The Scripture is so full of testimonies to this important truth, that it seems to mingle with every other doctrine, and serves as a kind of master-key to unlock every other mystery. Take away this, and the Redeemer loses half his praise ; the types and sacrifices of the law lose half their significancy ; for they shadow forth the sin of our nature, as well as our actual transgressions, and Jesus came to deliver us from the guilt of our nature, as well as from the evil of our lives. Oh, what an unmeaning heap of words has been handed down to us in the law of Moses, the Psalms of David, the confessions of Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, Daniel, Jeremiah, and the rest of God's saints, if that evil nature which caused them to groan did not really exist ! Above all, what shall we make of Romans iii. and vii. ? What shall we understand by the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between the old man and the new man, between the carnal and spiritual affections ? Was St Paul dreaming when he said, " I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwell-

eth no good thing?"* Was he beside himself when he declared, "that he found in himself a law, that when he would do good, evil was present with him?"† That though by divine grace he had learnt "to delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet still he saw another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members?"‡ The apostle of the Gentiles "who laboured more abundantly than they all;"§ he, who "had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to utter"|| amongst sinful men; he, who "counted all things but dung that he might win Christ;"¶ he, who was "ready, not only to be bound, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus;"** this chosen vessel of mercy, full of zeal and full of love, *and under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, so groaned under the burden of the original corruption of his nature; the law of sin war-

* Rom. vii. 18.

† Rom. vii. 21.

‡ Rom. vii. 22, 23.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

|| 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

¶ Phil. iii. 8.

** Acts xxi. 13.

ring in his members ; that he was compelled to cry out, “ O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” * And from the time of Paul there has never been a real Christian who has not often felt himself constrained to adopt his language, and to say in the language of his soul, “ who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” The remedy, as is usual in Scripture, follows close upon the complaint : “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ” †

In this epistle, the Holy Ghost is seen peculiarly to fulfil his sacred office. He shall convince of sin, of righteousness and of justification. How strong is the language in which he presses the first condemning testimony home to our shrinking conscious bosoms ! How sweet and clear the second part of his testimony, when he takes of the righteousness of Jesus and shows it to us, yea, tells us that it is ours, if we will cease to go about to establish our own ! And when he is fulfilling the third part of his mission, with what triumphant energy has he inspired the Apostle to unfold to us, how we

* Rom. vii. 13.

† Rom. vii. 25.

are justified freely by his grace, acquitted so that none can lay aught to our charge, not Satan himself, that accuser of the brethren ; for the prince of this world is judged, Satan bruised under our feet !

But to return to my subject—" we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin, as it is written, " There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips ; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood ; destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Rom. iii. 9—17. Which compare with Psalm liii. Now, since God the Spirit knew the hearts of his creatures, and has given this as a faithful portrait of the real character of every individual upon the face of the earth ; it follows that *all*

have that original sin, which is the fruitful source of all evil actions and dispositions.

Having now brought our testimony from the “three that bear witness in heaven,”—having heard from God the Father, that the imagination of man’s heart is only evil from his youth;—from God the Son, that out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; that the corrupt heart, like a corrupt tree, can only bring forth corrupt fruit:—and from God the Spirit, that the carnal mind is enmity against God; that in us dwelleth no good thing:—let us now turn again to the words of our church, and see whether she has received from Scripture, this humbling doctrine of man’s utter depravity. Of original or birth sin—Article 9.—‘Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam’ (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), ‘*but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man* that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of *his own nature inclined to evil*; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damna-

tion. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.’ Of works before justification—Article 13.—‘ Works done *before* the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, *are not pleasant to God*, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ. For that they are not done as God both willed and commanded them to be done, *we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.*’ In the second Article, we are assured that Christ was a sacrifice, ‘ not only for *original guilt*, but also for the actual sins of men.’

Now as to all those vain and curious questions which men, who would be wise above that which is written, have raised on the nature and causes of original sin, and how it is conveyed from Adam to his fallen race—with all these I would have nothing to do. All I want to insist upon, is the doctrine *as it stands in every part of the Bible* ; as it is set forth in the articles of our Church ; as it is exemplified in the heart of every individual upon the face of the earth. In our own heart we cannot but find it, if we will let conscience do its office. Let then, “ every mouth be stopped, and all

the world become guilty before God.”* Let us pray that the Spirit of truth would convince of what is written in the Word of Truth—that he would make ‘the burden of original sin grievous and intolerable’ to us: for till we thus perceive the truth, so as really to groan under the weight of our corrupt nature, we shall not discover the necessity of that new and holy nature, without which we cannot enter the kingdom of God. “They that be whole need not a physician.”† They that be righteous desire not a Saviour. They that acknowledge sin in part, but not that they are *wholly* depraved—estranged *from the womb*,—these, not conscious that the whole garment is spotted by the flesh, will seek to patch new cloth on the old garment, and so will but make the rent worse: they will seek to put the new wine into old bottles—and what wonder if the old bottles burst, and the wine run out, and the bottles perish? No—the whole man must be renewed; and such as feel not their need of this thorough renovation, have not yet made the first step towards the possession of eternal life.

* Romans iii. 19.

† Matthew ix. 12.

For how can we be *alive to God* without knowing that we were once “dead in sins?”* How be restored to the Shepherd of our souls, without knowing that by nature we were as sheep going astray?† How become children of grace, and yet not know that we “were by nature children of wrath even as others?”‡ What should we think of the man, who was born blind; if, when he was restored to sight, he had professed to be ignorant that he was born blind? This cannot be—therefore as in nature, so in grace. Those who have been really converted from a state of nature, all join in their confessions of that state. I was blind; but now I see. I was dead; but now I am alive. I was lost; but now am found. Nor do they think they can too often revive their sense of God’s goodness and their own misery, by thus looking back to “the rock from whence they were hewn—to the hole of the pit from which they were digged.”§ I conclude this subject in the words of one of the brightest luminaries of our Church—he has been called the judicious Hooker: had he lived in the present age a far different

* Ephes. ii. 1, 5. † Isaiah liii. 6.

‡ Ephes. ii. 3. § Isaiah li. 1.

title would have been allotted to him ; for he is, of all authors I ever read, the most full and decisive upon what are called *Calvinistic doctrines*. ‘ It may seem something extreme which I will speak : therefore let every one judge it as his own heart shall tell him, and no otherwise. I will but only make a demand,—if God should yield unto us, not as he did unto Abraham, if fifty, forty, thirty : yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes this city should not be destroyed : but, and if he should make us an offer thus large—search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam ; find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him pure without any stain or blemish at all ; and for that one man’s only action, neither man nor angel shall feel the torments prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom to deliver men and angels could be found to be among the sons of men ?’

CHAPTER II.

ON FREE GRACE.

THE principal arguments drawn from Scripture against the absolute freeness of Divine grace in pardon, justification, and sanctification of sinners, are such as these: that the threats and promises of the Gospel are usually expressed in a *conditional* form; and that grace is promised to all who *diligently seek* for it: this seeking then becomes a sort of meritorious act, by which we attract the notice or favour of God, and induce him to give us his grace. We will endeavour to examine each of these arguments separately.

And first, it must be allowed that there is a sense in which both the threats and promises of the Gospel are conditional. As to the former of these, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die:”*

* Ezekiel xviii. 20.

“cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them:”* “Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”† These are some of the threats of that “God who is a consuming fire.”‡ And surely we have abundantly fulfilled the conditions to which they are attached. Death—even the death of the soul is our well-earned wages. The curse is our natural inheritance. We are born to it: for we are conceived in sin—we are shapen in iniquity—we go astray as soon as we are born, speaking lies; and every day, and every hour, and every moment, do we confirm our right and title to this inheritance; deserving, both by nature and practice, the fulfilment of every one of the heavy threats of that God who cannot lie. Now I would ask what efforts of our own can rescue us from the fulfilment of these threatenings, since we are debtors to do the *whole* law? and if we offend in *one* point, we are guilty of *all*; and cursed are we if we continue not in *all* things written

* Gal. iii. 10. † James ii. 10.

‡ Deut. iv. 24.

in the book of the law to do them. We can but deserve them over and over and over. O talk not of conditions—*these are the conditions!* *We have done our part*—have irretrievably ruined ourselves. We owe ten thousand talents, and *have nothing to pay!*

But *Christ* has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being *made a curse for us*. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by him all that believe are justified from all things.”* He, and He only has borne the threats of God in his people’s stead ; and he has borne them so completely away, that they shall never be mentioned to believers any more. Their sins have been transferred to Jesus. “He himself bare them in his own body on the tree.”† Infinite justice has been appeased by an infinitely complete satisfaction,”‡ and now (oh let us lift up our hearts in gratitude unspeakable), “God can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”§ Thus if we believe in Jesus, we escape the

* Acts xiii. 38, 39. † 1 Peter ii. 24.

‡ John i. 7 ; ii. 1, 2. Heb. ix. 14 ; x. 12—18.

§ Rom. iii. 26.

threatened curse of God, not because *we* have fulfilled one single condition, by which we *might* have escaped it, but simply and solely because *Jesus has borne the curse for us*. He has borne it *all*, and he has borne it *alone*. His almighty shoulders have sustained the entire weight of the curse, one tittle of which had been sufficient to *grind the whole human race to powder*. He has “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”* And now, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again,”† thus proving *that all is paid*; for having once as our Surety taken upon himself our mighty debt, we may rest satisfied that justice did not let him go until he had paid *the uttermost farthing*.

Consider the cross of Christ; *who* it was that suffered. “The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”‡ *How* he suf-

* Col. ii. 14.

† Rom. viii. 33, 34.

‡ Isa. ix. 6.

ferred, "behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."* Remember that Christ crucified is "the wisdom of God and the power of God;"† and then say, would this mighty plan have been devised to avert the curse from man, if he had been able by any efforts of his own to escape it? But there are those who willingly allow that Christ has done *a great deal* towards saving them from the wrath to come; but *not* that he has done *all*. It must be a kind of joint concern, in which he has engaged to pay a part, if we pay the rest. His salvation is regarded as a sort of a reserve to make up deficiencies. True, He died for us, but then we must *merit* by repentance, that his death be applied to us; we must do what *we* can to appease God's justice, and he will throw his blood into the scale, to make up the rest.

I do sincerely believe that of all the delusions which Satan has succeeded in putting into the hearts of men; of all his subtle contrivances to rob Christ of his glory, this is the Master-piece. For of Satan's other devices we are

* Lam. i. 12. † 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

less ignorant, but this one often comes to us dressed up in such a specious shape, as to “deceive, if possible, the very elect.”* Many to whom the absurdity of purchasing heaven by their own good works is sufficiently evident; who see that pardon is bought with the precious blood of Christ; are yet capable of the still greater absurdity of thinking to *buy* that precious blood which is *above all price*, with the poor imperfect offer of a few sighs and tears which they call repentance. And what is this repentance? Alas! they have never repented at all, if they be not ready from the heart to acknowledge with the excellent Bishop Beveridge—‘I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are an aggravation of them; my repentance needs to be repented of; my tears want washing; and the very washings of my tears need to be washed over again, in the blood of my Redeemer.’

Then let us freely acknowledge that the heavy burden of God’s wrath has been lifted away, *only* by the atonement of Christ, and not by any superadded condition of our own perform-

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

ing. Christ has trodden the winepress of God's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. And as to repentance, that is just as much the purchase of his blood, as heaven itself is.* “Thou has destroyed thyself, but *in me* is thine help,”† is the language of Scripture to all who are looking round for some means of escape from the angry threatenings of God's word; some refuge to which they may flee from the wrath to come.

As to the promises, I do not say that they are unconditional either, but I do say that the conditions on which they depend are such as guilty man is altogether incapable of performing. I do say that Jesus as our *Surety*, has performed all these *for* us, and *by his Spirit* will perform them all, *in* us. Through his perfect atonement we escape the threatenings; through his unspotted obedience, we become heirs of the promises,—heirs of eternal life. For if the blame of our sins have been imputed to *Him*, then has the merit of His righteousness been imputed to *us*. “If he has been made sin for us, then have we been made the righteousness

* Acts v. 31.

† Hosea xiii. 9.

of God in him.”* And because the promises are ours for his sake, therefore the conditions of them are worked in us by his free Spirit; “for it is not we who live the life of faith, but Christ that liveth in us.”† I am very earnest on this point, because I believe that every thing we arrogate to ourselves in the work of redemption, is just so much taken from the finished work of Jesus. It is indeed very natural to our carnal minds to wish to have something of our own to look at, to rest upon, to glory in; but in proportion as we become spiritually-minded, we shall discover that we have nothing of our own but sin and misery and helplessness; we shall learn to say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.” “By grace ye are saved through faith; and even that faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”‡ “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”§ Oh then may we, receiving “abundance of grace, and of the gift

* 2 Cor. v. 21. Rom. iv. 6; xi. 24; v. 19. Gal. iii. 29.

† Gal. ii. 20. John xv. 4, 5.

‡ Eph. ii. 8, 9.

§ Rom. vi. 23.

of righteousness, reign in life by one, even Jesus Christ.”*

One of the sweetest promises, upon which the mind of every Christian rests with unspeakable delight, runs thus: “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”† Here is a *condition*, Him that cometh; and a *promise*, I will not cast out. But who *are* those that come to Jesus? “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.”‡ “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”§ “No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father.”|| How distinctly are we here told, that the same free mercy which promises to receive us *when we come*, must be put forth to *make us come*, or *we never should come*. The promise will surely be fulfilled to all who obey the condition; but none *can* obey the condition, save those *to whom it is given*. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.”¶ Precious promise! indispensable condition! For how can such as delight not

* Rom. v. 17.

† John vi. 37.

‡ John vi. 37.

§ John vi. 44.

|| John vi. 65.

¶ John xv. 10.

in holiness; abide in the love of the most holy Jesus? Yet I will freely confess, that if the performance of even this most just and reasonable condition depended in any measure on *myself*, I should think the Lord Jesus had most cruelly mocked me, in setting before me a promise which, in my case at least, must for ever remain unfulfilled. But blessings on his sacred name, he has not made the promise without providing for the condition; having also promised to put his laws in my mind, and write them on my heart.* So that I look on these very *conditions* as so many *promises*. As though my Saviour had said, ‘Ye *shall* abide in my love, for *that is unchangeable*; but ye can by no means abide in my love, except ye keep my commandments. Now *ye* are not able to do this, therefore, behold I, even I will write them in your hearts, and copy them out in your lives. Freely then approach my throne of grace, and ask me for this promise; and as ye cannot so much as ask *without me*, behold, I have promised to pour out upon you the Spirit of grace and supplications,

* Heb. viii. 10.

who shall abide with you for ever, teaching you both what to pray for and how to pray.’* In short, I believe the heart of every redeemed sinner will enter deeply into the feeling which burns within mine while I say, Thank God, that the promises are not yea and amen *in me*, a miserable, weak and sinful worm, incapable of performing one single condition of them; but they are all yea and amen to me *in Christ Jesus*. *For his sake*, God will make them all good to me; yes, for his sake *they are mine already*. They are my own inheritance, once forfeited by sin, but now redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; my purchased possession, which can never cease to be mine till the price that was paid down for it ceases to be precious in the Father’s sight. They are the sure and steadfast anchor of my soul; the joy and rejoicing of my heart; the song which enlivens this house of my pilgrimage; better to me than life, dearer than my necessary food; sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; more precious than fine gold; purer than silver purified seven times. When my soul pants after

* Zech. xii. 10. Rom. viii. 26.

any of these most sweet and tender unsealings of God's love, I will not, I cannot, go to him and say, Lord, give me those promises because I have performed the conditions of them, and am therefore *worthy* that thou shouldest give them to me. God forbid that I should take such a plea within my lips, for in so doing my own heart would condemn me, and God, who is greater than my heart, would condemn me. No, when I draw near to my reconciled God and Father, I will fill my mouth with far other arguments than these. I will say to him, Lord, thou knowest that *I* have *not* performed the conditions of these promises, but JEHOVAH *my righteousness has fulfilled them all for me*. I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies ; but worthy is the Lamb that was slain ; and for his dear sake thou wilt give me the best and greatest of them all ; and that exceedingly abundantly, above all that I can ask or think.

Every condition necessary to salvation is fulfilled in us, not by any efforts of our own, but by our receiving continually grace for grace, out of the fulness of Jesus. Repentance is necessary, but we cannot repent of ourselves ; and

therefore Jesus is exalted to give repentance.* It behoves us, not only to repent of, but to *for-sake* sin; but sooner shall the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, than we shall do good, who are accustomed to do evil; and therefore *Jesus* is sent to bless us, “in turning away every one of us from our iniquities.”† *Faith* is a necessary condition of salvation: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”‡ “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life; he that believeth not shall not see life.”§ Yet this same faith is the “gift of God.”|| It is “given to us on the behalf of Christ, to believe.”¶ “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”** *Love* is no less necessary than faith. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema maran-atha.”†† But “the carnal or natural mind is enmity against God.”‡‡ And how then can it act so directly against its own nature as to *love* Him? It is not only *in-*

* Acts v. 31.

† Acts iii. 26.

‡ Acts xvi. 31.

§ John vi. 47; iii. 36.

|| Ephes. ii. 8.

¶ Phil. i. 29.

** 1 Cor. xii. 3. Matt. xvi. 17.

†† 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

‡‡ Rom. viii. 7.

different, not merely *slightly* opposed, but in *its very nature absolute enmity against God*. “Nor can it be subject to the law of God;”* for the fulfilling of that law is love. Miserably hopeless then is our case, if that heart, which is thus defined “enmity against God,” must so overcome the moral incapacity of its own nature, as to fill itself with love to Him. But *Jesus* has reconciled us who were alienated and enemies in our own minds by wicked works; and *for his sake*, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.”† *Good works* are absolutely necessary to salvation; “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.”‡ “Faith without works is dead: I will show thee my faith by my works.”§ But it has been already urged, that as the corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so neither can we who are evil do good things. “Therefore the children of God are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”||

* Rom. viii. 7.

† Col. i. 21. Rom. v. 5. 1

Tim. i. 14.

‡ John xv. 8.

§ James ii. 19, 20.

|| Ephes. ii. 10.

True it is, that we are commanded to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling ;” but the reason follows—“for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure.”* I have used the word condition in this place, for the more convenient exposition of my meaning ; but I consider the use of it, as applied to *us*, to be altogether incorrect. Faith, love, holiness, &c. were indeed to *Christ*, *conditions* of our salvation ; but to us they are the *consequences* of salvation ; or rather they are *a part* of our salvation, purchased for us by the obedience and atonement of Jesus Christ, “who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”†

We find then in ourselves an utter poverty of every thing that is spiritually good ; “but God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.”‡ We are nothing, can do nothing, say nothing, think nothing but what is evil. “Christ is all and in all.” “Every good and every perfect gift cometh from above,”

* Phil. ii. 12, 13. Isa. xxvi. 12. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

† Titus ii. 14.

‡ Ephes. i. 3.

and is given to us by the Father, for his beloved Son's sake. "We are complete in Him."*

I may seem to have often repeated the words 'gifts' and 'given;' but they cannot come over too often, nor be too earnestly dwelt on. The Scriptures are perpetually renewing the delightful repetition, and presenting the idea of somewhat gratuitously bestowed, under every possible variety of language and imagery. Sometimes they speak of buying the gospel blessings, and tell us to "come and buy without money and without price."† And what is this, but to come and hold out the empty hand of faith, and receive as a free gift all that God will put into it. Sometimes they represent sin under the idea of a *vast debt*, expressly declaring that "Jesus frankly forgives all, when we have nothing to pay."‡ So long then as we think we have *any thing to pay*, we do not come under the description of those to whom Jesus frankly forgives all. But when convinced of our depravity and helplessness, we come

* Col. iii. 11. James i. 17. Col. ii. 10.

† Isaiah lv. 1.

‡ Matt. xviii. 27.

poor, naked and empty to Jesus, casting from us all confidence, save only that which his tender love and mercy excites, making mention of *his righteousness*, and *his only*; then, and not till then, will he freely pardon, freely clothe and enrich us, freely receive us among the children, and make us perfect through his own comeliness, which he puts upon the souls that simply trust in Him. The poor and needy, the weak and helpless, are his peculiar care, while those who think they have any strength or riches of their own to trust to, are not objects of his bounty, for “he feedeth the strong with judgment,”* and “sendeth the rich empty away.”†

If any of the promises are conditional, those which are expressed in the form of a covenant must be of that description, since the very word implies a compact or agreement. Let us then inquire into the terms of that covenant which God has condescended to make with his people.

We know the *first* covenant between God and man, *how that was kept*; and if man, as

* Ezek. xxxiv. 15.

† Luke i. 53.

he came out of the hands of his Creator, upright, innocent and holy, could not keep conditions which he knew to be holy, just and good, how shall fallen man, “in whom dwelleth no good thing,” keep any conditions fit for a Holy God to propose? I have heard it said, ‘By sincere, though imperfect obedience:’ both which terms, applied in this sense, appear to me absolute nonsense. For, in the first place, is it not blaspheming the holiness and justice of God, to suppose that He “who cannot behold iniquity,” will be satisfied with an *imperfect* obedience? That he will let go a little of his holiness—and a little of his justice, and part altogether with his attribute of truth? For *He has said*, “That whosoever performs not the *whole* law, is guilty of *all*; and that “He will, by no means, clear the guilty.”* In the next place, how can *we* whose hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,† talk of *sincere* obedience? We must have the deceitful heart taken away, and new hearts created within us, before we can render

* Isaiah ii. 10. Exodus xxxiv. 7.

† Jeremiah xvii. 9.

a sincere obedience : and then it will be no longer our own obedience. To express myself more clearly—‘ works done *before* justification have the nature of sin, and cannot so much as make us meet to receive grace :’ (Art. 9) these therefore must be wholly out of the question, in any covenant, by which we think to merit God’s favour. ‘ Works done *after* justification,’ though miserably imperfect, ‘ yet have something of the nature of sincere obedience :’ but to call these the cause, either *directly* or *indirectly* of our justification, when they cannot by any means be produced till *after* justification ; this would be, in the most preposterous manner to confound the *cause* with the *effect*, and to put the last *first*. Justification is the *producing cause* : works done *after* justification are the *natural effect*. Let me correct myself. The free love of God in Christ is *the sole cause* both of justification and sanctification ; but He has so ordered it that the one shall *always follow* the other in a fixed and inseparable connection ; and to say that good works *precede* or *occasion* justification, is to say that the fruit on the tree was there before ever the tree was planted : nay—that had

not the fruit first blossomed and ripened, the tree had never come there at all—it is, in fact, to say that the fruit planted the tree.

Let us cease then from attempting, in whole or in part, to stand before God upon that covenant of works which our father Adam, with all the advantages of a sinless nature, did not keep. Far other are the means of acceptance which the Scriptures point out to us. They tell us that Jesus, “the second Adam—the mediator of the new covenant,” has taken upon himself, as our Surety, to perform all the conditions annexed to it. He has borne all the penalties due to our disobedience; and has wrought out for us an obedience, so perfect, that the eye of God himself can perceive no flaw in it; so infinitely meritorious, that those poor sinners who have it on, appear in the sight of the Father “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing:” they are all fair—there is no spot in them.* Place now our *sincèrest* obedience by the side of the righteousness of Jesus. Compare our faint desires which expire in the utterance; our tardy wishes which linger in

* Ephes. v. 27. Cant. iv. 7.

the performance; our few specious actions whose fair outside is a cloak to much that is selfish in the motives of them, and much that is perverse in the will. Compare this righteousness with the righteousness of Jesus; of Him who “made it his meat and drink to do his Father’s will;” whose zeal for the house of God “consumed him;” who did always such things as pleased God; who “knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;” who “was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” and himself made higher than the heavens.* Oh! who would appear before God in his own filthy and ragged garments, when he might be arrayed in the glorious apparel of Christ’s righteousness? Why—why cling any longer to the idea of our own works, as the means of winning God’s favour? Do we not see that this covering is narrower than “that a man may wrap himself in it?” that it is not the covering of God’s Spirit? and above all I would ask—why mix what God hath for ever put asunder? Is not the righteousness of Jesus sufficiently meritorious, that it must be helped out with

* John ix. 34. Psalm lxix. 9. Heb. vii. 26.

our righteousness ? If it be a *perfect righteousness*, what need of trying to *improve* it by tacking to it some paltry mixture of our own fancied deservings ! This is the folly of man—of that vain worm who would be wiser than his Maker !

I cannot forbear mentioning in this place, the notable methods which some who call themselves serious Christians, have hit upon to eke out that perfect righteousness which they think to be insufficient ; but which God has judged to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. There are some who look upon the merits of Christ as given merely to *supply what is lacking* in their own *sincere* obedience : these would cut such pieces out of the beautiful garment as would serve to patch up their own filthy rags ; forgetting that even the soldiers, who crucified Christ, refused to part his garment when they observed that it was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Others again profess to trust in Christ's righteousness ; but talk, I know not what, of *deserving* by their own obedience, that this righteousness may be applied to them. These would put on the "spotless robe ;" but Christ must accept their own righteousness as a kind of equivalent or

compensation for it. A third sort feel that they cannot do without Christ's righteousness ; but then it is *not enough*—*they* must also do *their* part ; and when they have done this, they think that God will accept them : not for the sake of theirs alone—for that would be presumption, nor for the sake of Christ's alone—for that would be licentiousness ; but in some way or other for the sake of the two together. These truly would adorn the “glorious dress” with their own faded tinsel picked from the dung-hill. They would make it more acceptable in God's sight by sewing on to it their own filthy rags. It is not so with those who have learned the truth “as it is in Jesus.” They desire with St Paul “to be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law ; but that which is through the faith of Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* They know that Jesus has “made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness:”† by which all the promises of the new covenant are made as sure to believers, as the justice and faithfulness—the oath and counsel of God can

* Phil. iii. 9.

† Daniel ix. 24.

make them. Wonder not that the ministers of Christ should be exceedingly jealous on this point; for this is the wedding garment, without which whoso dares to appear before God, shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.

But to return to the promises of the covenant: for, at the risk of apparent repetition, I am desirous of setting this most important subject in a clear point of view;—so far from holiness being made the *condition* of our obtaining them, it is itself *the great promise* insured to us by that covenant: “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”* “This is the covenant that I will make with them—I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”†

The character, by which the spirit of truth designates fallen men, is that of “covenant-breakers.”‡ “They,” *like men*, “have trans-

* Jer. xxxii. 40.

† Jer. xxxi. 33. See also Heb. viii. 10; x. 16.

‡ Rom. i. 31.

gressed the covenant.”* Isaiah says, “The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant.”† What then is the everlasting covenant? And how are we “covenant-breakers” to derive any benefit from it? Are the *terms* of the *everlasting* covenant changed since God entered into covenant with Adam, as the representative of the whole human race? Has the Holy God ceased to stand upon a perfect obedience? Will he accept less at our hands than he would at those of our father Adam? Has he reversed the decree—“The soul that sinneth, it shall die?” No—the terms of the *everlasting* covenant remain unchanged. God still requires a sinless obedience: a righteousness without a flaw. Moreover, his justice demands satisfaction for his broken covenant. We can fulfil neither the one nor the other of these requirements. But behold the second Adam—who is the Lord from heaven! With him God hath established his covenant, as the representative of a remnant chosen according to the

* Hosea vi. 7.

† Isaiah xxiv. 31.

election of grace. Jesus is the mediator and the surety of a better covenant than that which was made with Adam, or the typical covenant made with Moses. And yet the terms of the covenants are the same—perfect obedience: death in case of disobedience. But the death has been borne by him “who died that we might live.” The obedience has been fulfilled by him “through whose obedience many were made righteous.” Jesus, as the surety of the everlasting covenant, has both paid the full penalty incurred by his people for the breach of the old covenant; and has likewise performed for them every condition of the new. “He was made sin for us.” We are “made the righteousness of God in him.” Thus, in the second Adam, we have paid to the uttermost farthing both the debt of satisfaction, and the debt of obedience. In our surety Jesus, we have “received at the Lord’s hand double for all our sins.” In our surety Jesus we have worked out our title to eternal life: we become rightful heirs of the promises. Thus God has made with his people “an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure;” and this covenant is “all their salvation, and all their desire.” Moreover, this covenant which was

confirmed of God in Christ before the world was, cannot be disannulled by the covenant of works made with Adam *since* the creation of the world, nor by the law, which was added nearly 3000 years afterwards. It is delightful to trace this covenant from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures of Truth, as it was faintly revealed to Adam and Noah; more clearly set forth to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; typified in every part of the ceremonial law, and foretold by the law-giver Moses; as it was sung by David, prophesied by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of the prophets; manifested and fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus; and explained and enforced by the Apostle Paul and others of the holy Apostles. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—for his free and complete salvation! for, if it were not *freely* given, we could *never* attain to it; and, if it were not *complete without our help*, we should be but *half* saved. Surely this of all others is that "gift which is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, which way soever it turneth, it prospereth."*

* Proverbs xvii. 10.

The great question then about the promises seems to be, not so much whether they are *conditional*, as whether God looks to *Christ*, or to *us*, for the *performance* of those conditions. If to *Christ*, the burden is laid upon “one that is *mighty* :” if to *us*, then we are undone ; ‘for the condition of man after the fall is such, that he *cannot turn and prepare himself*, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God : wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by *Christ preventing us*, that we may have a *good will, working in us when we have that good will.*’ (Art. 10.) So then ‘we are accounted righteous before God, only *for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings* : wherefore, that we are justified *by faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as is more largely expressed in the Homily on Justification.’ (Art. 11.)

We now come to the second argument.—Grace will be given to all who diligently seek for it. But if we attend to the Scripture account of every man, woman and child by na-

ture, we shall find that this seeking also is the *effect following upon grace received : not the cause producing it*. By this I mean to say, that the very act of *seeking grace* proves that *we have received grace already* ; and that the very ability to seek, is itself the *free gift* of God's sovereign grace. If every thought of man's heart is *evil*, and that *continually*, surely it is not out of that heart that the first desire of any good thing can spring. If, by nature, there is *none that seeketh after God*, whence can the first attempt to seek him arise but from free grace drawing us *contrary to nature*? Freely must grace be given to enable us to seek at first ; and freely must it be continued, to enable us to go on seeking. I know that *none shall seek the Lord in vain ; none who come shall be cast out ; none who believe shall come short of everlasting life ; none who choose the better part shall have it taken from them : but then none can seek the Lord, unless he first seek them.** None can come except it be given them of the Father ;—none can believe save as many as are ordained to

* John x. 16. Ezekiel xxxiv. 4. Luke xix. 10. Psalm cxix. 176. Ephesians ii. 13.

eternal life; *none can choose Christ except he first choose them.** If again we consider the magnitude of the change which must take place in every sinner's heart before he can truly and earnestly seek God, we shall be convinced that no part of it is properly his own. He must "be born again;"† he must "become a new creature; *old things must pass away, all things must become new;*"‡ he must "pass from death into life;"§ "from darkness to light—from the power of Satan unto God;"|| —"from going about to establish his own righteousness, to submit himself to the righteousness of God;"¶ and this to a proud carnal heart, is the most difficult of all. And who is sufficient for these things? Who but He that first formed us in the womb, can cause us to be born again of the Spirit? Who but he that originally created us, is able to create us anew in Christ Jesus? Who but the Giver of natural life can give spiritual life; "and quicken those that were dead in trespasses and sins?"**

* John vi. 65; xv. 16. Acts xiii. 48.

† John iii. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 17.

§ 1 John iii. 14. || Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Peter ii. 9.

¶ Rom. x. 3. ** Eph. ii. 1.

When the Lord of life stood by the grave of Lazarus, and said, Lazarus come forth, and he that was dead instantly came forth ; who would say that this act of lifting himself up was the cause of his coming to life, and not rather that his coming to life was the cause of his being able to lift himself up ? It is thus when Jesus by his word and Spirit says to the heart of a sinner, “Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”* Instantly that dead soul arises, and its first act is seeking, or prayer ; but this same act of seeking is the *effect* of spiritual life, not the *cause*. We pray *because we are alive, not that we may live*. We cannot quicken ourselves when dead in sin, any more than we can bring a dead body to life. But when *Jesus* has quickened us, we shall as surely perform all those actions, which demonstrate the soul to be spiritually alive, as a dead body when raised by divine power, will surely perform all the functions of a living person. Grace, great grace must be infused, to enable us to seek at all, and he who first gave grace to seek, will give *more* grace in answer

* Eph. v. 14.

to that seeking, thus fulfilling that precious Scripture which saith—"To him that hath, shall be given."* We neither *begin* nor *carry on* the work of grace in our own hearts. Jesus is the *author* and *finisher*, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of our faith. From the first spark of grace that faintly glimmers upon us here, to the full blaze of glory which shall burst upon us in heaven ; *all, all, is his doing* ; it is *he* that made us alive (spiritually), not we ourselves. It is God who both *begins* the good work in us, and also will "perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."†

I cannot quit this subject without adverting to the very strong words in which our Church insists upon it throughout the whole service, perpetually reminding us that from God all holy desires, as well as good counsels, and all just works do proceed. In the Collect for Sexagesima Sunday : ' O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do.' But we *are* putting our trust in something we do, if we are trusting to obtain God's promises on any conditions of our own performing ; and we are again uttering a solemn mockery in the second

* Matt. xiii. 12. † Phil. i. 6.

Collect in Lent, ‘Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.’ In the Collect for Easter-day, we acknowledge that it is God who ‘by his special grace preventing us, doth put into our minds good desires, and that we need his continual help to bring the same to good effect.’ In the 4th Sunday after Easter:—‘Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise.’ In the 5th—‘Grant that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.’ In the 1st after Trinity—‘Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace.’ In the 3d after Trinity—‘We, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray.’ In the 9th after Trinity—‘Grant to us the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will.’ In the 13th after Trinity—‘Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift

it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service, &c.’ It appears to me that this collect is a peculiarly beautiful lesson ; it so strongly sets forth the doctrine of which I am speaking, and so wisely guards it from abuse, acknowledging in the plainest terms, that as we cannot obtain the promises *by* a holy life, so neither can we obtain them without it. In the 17th after Trinity we pray that ‘ his grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to good works.’ In the 19th—‘ O God, forasmuch as without thee, we are not able to please thee.’ In the 25th—‘ Stir up, we beseech thee,’ &c. But I will not take up more time in multiplying testimonies from this most evangelical service. If these do not prove that our great reformers at least thought us utterly incapable of doing one thing acceptable in the sight of God, except by his free grace first of all putting the desire into our hearts, then enabling us to breathe out that desire in fervent prayer, and then fulfilling the desire and prayer of its own inspiring : if they do not mean that the work of salvation in the heart, is the work of *free and sovereign mercy*, from beginning to end, I am at a loss to con-

ceive what they *do* mean, or why they came there at all.

It is absolutely necessary to a clear and full view of this doctrine, that we ascribe to the *free, sovereign and unmerited* grace of God, the first desire after him that ever arose in our hearts, as well as the fulfilling of that desire when expressed in prayer. We must be convinced that *nothing* in the work of salvation is *our own*, but only the gift of God's love to us in Christ Jesus. Christ died for us when we were enemies :* the benefits of his death are applied to us, *for the purpose* of reconciling us, not in consequence of *our* making any advances towards being reconciled. He died for the *ungodly*, for those who were *without strength* ;† *without strength* to come to Him ; *without strength* to form so much as a wish to come to Him. The *desire* to come is *given for His sake* : the *ability* to come is *given for His sake* : the *acceptance on coming* is an acceptance *for the beloved sake of this beloved Saviour*, “ without whom we can do nothing.”‡ Those who say, ‘ Grace will be given if we ask, but then asking

* Rom. v. 10. † Rom. v. 6. ‡ John xv. 5.

must *precede* or *procure* the given grace ;' are in effect robbing God of much of the glory due unto His name. For the power and the inclination to ask are of themselves a part of the free gift of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus. They are the beginning of God's work in the heart, and to say that we begin this work, is no other than to say that we can create ourselves anew in Christ Jesus. I will venture to affirm that if God *waited* to give us His grace till we ask Him for it of our own accord, we should go without it to all eternity.

The great source of error on this head, even amongst serious people, is, that they cannot bring themselves to think they have *nothing of their own* in the work of salvation. Therefore it is, that when constrained to acknowledge that the grace given them *when* they seek, is from God only ; their self righteousness betakes itself to another strong hold ; and we find them laying claim to their *asking* and *seeking*, as if *that* at least was the effort of their own will, the spontaneous act of their own power. This is just as if one should take a dead person by the hand, breathe life into him, and lift him up upon his feet ; and that person should make a

show of acknowledgement to his benefactor, by allowing to that benefactor the praise of lifting him up *after* he was alive, and keeping him alive ever since, and yet should maintain that *the first breath of all* came into him by his own spontaneous act, by the effect of his own unassisted power. The absurdity of such an assertion, with regard to temporal life, would strike us at once; but we are not so struck with it in reference to spiritual life; and the reason is this. When we talk of a dead carcass, we know what we are talking about. There it lies before our eyes, incapable of breathing, moving, speaking. We perfectly know what we mean when we say that a dead *body* cannot raise itself to life. But when we speak of a *soul* dead in trespasses and sins, we too often use the phrase merely because we find it in the Scriptures; without the slightest conception of the awful reality expressed by it. Nor is it till we have ourselves in some measure passed from death unto life, that we begin to perceive the dreadful and close analogy which really exists between the two states of natural and spiritual death. If God were to come to an unconverted person with the question, not, Can

these dry bones, but Can these dead souls live ! He would be apt to reply, Why not ? What should hinder them from raising themselves up, and breathing the breath of spiritual life ? But when God has quickened us from our own death in trespasses and sins, our eyes are opened to see what spiritual death really is, and then we learn with trembling awe to reply ; “ Lord, thou knowest.” This is thy work, it is thou that must make us alive, and not we ourselves.

Since then men are universally disposed to go about establishing their own righteousness, how carefully ought we to close up every avenue through which this besetting sin might gain admittance, and rob us of our peace, by leading us to rob Christ of his praise. Many are the windings of our own treacherous hearts ; many are the devices of Satan by which he would tempt us to ascribe to our own strength, what God has done for us of his mere mercy. Nor let us think that a mistake here can be of trifling importance. God is very jealous for His great name ; and He has declared that if “ we will not lay it to heart to give glory to His name,” He will send a curse

upon us, and will even “curse our blessings.”* Many and glorious are the crowns which adorn the sacred head of Immanuel; let us not try to pluck thence the brightest and fairest of them all, for well does it become this King of kings. When we get to heaven, and receive the crown of glory, we shall be ready enough to cast *that* at His feet, and to say Thou *only* art worthy. Let us do the same with the crown of grace here; for surely we have as little right to arrogate the one to ourselves as the other.

A few words on a sentiment, not, it is to be hoped, very generally prevalent; yet as we do find, even in what is called the religious world, some who avowedly profess it, and many more who are secretly, perhaps unconsciously influenced by it; a brief notice of it may not be unnecessary. I allude to those who, finding the doctrine of free and sovereign grace very fully and strongly set forth in St Paul’s epistles, seem in all their arguments on the subject to abate somewhat of the divine authority of these epistles, and confine them-

* Malachi ii. 2.

selves to a few isolated statements from the gospel, &c. which they deem more consonant to their own views and feelings. To such I would say, St Paul is no more responsible for the matter contained in his epistles, than you or I are. These are not, in fact, *St Paul's epistles*: they are the epistles of *God the Holy Ghost*, faithfully transcribed and delivered to us by His servant Paul. The Holy Ghost speaking through the medium of Paul, cannot but speak in perfect unison with what He has declared through the medium of Peter or John, or any other of His inspired messengers. He may take up one instrument and lay down another, but the Spirit which speaks in them is the same. He may open the mouth of one of His servants to explain one mystery of His gospel; while He makes another more fully to dwell upon and unfold some other mystery: for He divideth unto every man severally as He will. But still the Spirit of the Lord is *One*. He cannot contradict himself, cannot speak contrary to the truth, for he is the Spirit of Truth, and is given to lead us into all truth. And of the inspired penmen, one and all we may say; "Have *they* any power at all to say

any thing? *The word that God put into their mouths, that have they spoken. They could not go beyond the word of the Lord their God, to say less or more."*

We shall never become perfectly reconciled to all parts of the word of God until He Himself bestows on us the spirit and temper of a little child, to receive without murmuring, or disputings, or carnal reasonings, whatsoever *JEHOVAH the Spirit* is pleased to say to us. That Spirit alone can take away the evil heart of unbelief, which prevents us from embracing the *whole* counsel of God, as revealed in his word. It is he that must open our hearts to attend to *all* the things written in his law. *Then* we shall perceive a connection and a harmony between every part and every doctrine of the Scriptures, which will fill us with ever-increasing wonder and delight. May he thus open our understandings, to understand the Scriptures, and to know the things that are *freely given to us of God*.

CHAPTER III.

ON ELECTING GRACE.

THE 17th Article gives so much better an account of the doctrine of Election or Predestination, than could be expressed by any words of mine, that I beg leave to place it at the head of this chapter.

‘Predestination to life is the *everlasting purpose* of God, whereby (*before the foundations of the world were laid*) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath *hosen in Christ out of mankind*, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be *called*, according to God’s purpose by his Spirit working in due season; they *through grace obey the calling*; they be *justified freely*, they be made sons of God by adoption: they

be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

‘As the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ *is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort* to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things as well *because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ*, as because it doth *fervently kindle their love towards God*; so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Chrst, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into recklessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

‘Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which

we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.'

The latter part of this article is awfully true, and the warning conveyed by it, should sink into every heart. But what then? Must godly persons renounce or suppress a doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture; strongly enforced by the articles of a church of which they are professed members; and *full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort*, merely because curious and carnal persons will "wrest it, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction?"* At this rate we must renounce every Scripture truth; for there is not one, which, while it is a savour of life unto life unto them that are saved, is not also a savour of death unto death, to them that perish.† Therefore we must not be afraid to receive with humility and simplicity *all* that the Scriptures have revealed to us on this subject. Let us then as in a former chapter search this sacred word and see what testimony we can bring from the Three that bear record in Heaven.

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

† 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

God the Father saith of himself by Moses, “that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy,” and “will have compassion on whom he will have compassion.”* God the Son has told us “that none can know the Father, save he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”† “That to some it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to others it is not given:”‡ “that no man can come to him except it were given him of the Father:”§ “that all whom the Father giveth him, shall come to him,”|| “that he will give eternal life to as many as God hath given him:”¶ “that of all which the Father hath given him he will lose nothing, but will raise it up again at the last day:”** “that many are called, but few chosen:”†† “that God hath an elect people, whom he hath chosen:”‡‡ “that he will avenge his own elect:”§§ “that it is impossible finally to deceive his elect:”||| “that he will gather

* Exod. xxxiii. 19. Rom. ix. 5. † Matt. x. 27.

‡ Matt. xiii. 11. § John vi. 65.

|| John vi. 37. ¶ John xvii. 2.

** John vi. 39. †† Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14.

‡‡ Mark xiii. 20. §§ Luke xviii. 7.

||| Matt. xxiv. 24.

together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other:"* "that he calleth his own sheep by name,† and leadeth them out from sin and self; and will bring his other sheep which are yet unborn, and they shall hear his voice, and that if any believe not, it is because they are not of his sheep:"‡ that "we did not choose him, but he hath chosen us, and ordained us, that we should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain:"§ "that he knows whom he hath chosen:"|| and that "his disciples are not of the world, because he hath chosen them out of the world:"¶ declares by the pen of St Luke; that "the Lord added to the church such as should be saved—and that as many as are ordained to eternal life believe:"** by that of Peter; that "all God's people are elect by the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" that they are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a pe-

* Matt. xxiv. 31.

† John x. 3.

‡ John x. 3, 16, 26.

§ John xv. 16.

|| John xiii. 18.

¶ John xv. 19.

** Acts ii. 47; xiii. 48.

culiar people; that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light;" that "the God of all grace is He who hath called them into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ:"* by James; that "God of his own will begetteth them with the word of truth," and that "known unto Him are all his works from the beginning of the world:"† (and if *all*, surely that most wondrous work, which is wrought every time God changes a sinner's heart) by Jude; that "the saints are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:"‡ by the disciple whom Jesus loved, that "they are born again, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" that they are "called, and chosen, and faithful; that their names are written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world; that if we love God it is because He first loved us."§ But of all His faithful messengers, God the Holy Ghost

* 1 Peter i. 2; ii. 9; v. 10.

† James i. 18. Acts xv. 18. ‡ Jude 1.

§ John i. 13. Rev. xvii. 8, 14; xiii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27. Luke x. 20. 1 John iv. 10. See also John xii. 39, 40.

hath made choice more especially of St Paul to dilate upon, and unfold a doctrine which might yet have been learnt from other Apostles, had the writings of St Paul never existed; a very small part of whose testimony is as follows:—"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren: moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified:"* compare this with the 17th Article above quoted, and say whether the Bible and the church do not unite in ascribing every step of our salvation to God only. "Wherefore there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work."†

How plainly does the Lord the Spirit here testify the utter impossibility of mixing grace and works. He shows us that if the very least

* Rom. viii 29, 30.

† Rom. xi. 5, 6.

mixture of work could be admitted into the covenant, grace would change its nature, and cease to be grace. It must be *all work, or all grace*; we cannot make a half-and-half covenant with God. He has offered us these two; we must be saved by the one,* or perish by the other.† “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”‡ “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ be-

* Ephes. ii. 8. † Gal. iii. 10.

‡ Ephes. i. 3—6, 11.

fore the world began.”* Time would fail me before I had done bringing forward Scripture testimonies to the doctrine of election; it is so interwoven with every part of holy writ, that it is difficult to take any part separately without impairing its effect. I will, therefore, only remark in conclusion, that our Lord uses the term *chosen* or *elect* no less than ten times in this sense in the New Testament, viz. Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14; xxiv. 31. Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27. Luke xviii. 7. John xiii. 18; xv. 16, 19; that it is of frequent occurrence in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles; and that the word predestinate is used several times by the Apostle Paul. It appears to me also impossible to read the gospel of St. John, or the Acts of the Apostles through, without perceiving that this doctrine runs like a rich vein through every passage. But while we are bound to embrace *all that the Scriptures teach* on this subject, we must cautiously guard against attempting to be wise *above what is written*, and

* 2 Tim. i. 9. See also Rom. ix. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Gal. iv. 6. 1 Thess. ii. 12; iv. 7. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12; ii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Titus i. 1—3.

we should do well to confine ourselves not only to the sense, but as much as possible to the *very words* of Scripture; lest we should darken counsel by words without knowledge. Yet must we neither reject any part of the written *Word of God*, nor try to twist and turn it so as to make it square with our own notions. *As it stands*, so we must receive it; with meekness of love, without partiality, without gain-saying.

Many are firmly persuaded of the truth of this doctrine, who yet shrink from declaring their conviction to others; as if some dangerous effect were to be apprehended from its propagation. The folly of such an apprehension is well pointed out in the following words of an eminent reformer, which I cannot forbear giving, as they afford a specimen of the dignified simplicity, sound judgment, and close reasoning which shine in almost every part of the *Institutes of Calvin*; a book which was held in repute as the finest apology for Protestantism that ever appeared; till the names of Calvin and Calvinist came to be held up as mere signs of a party in religion. ‘The Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which as nothing

necessary and useful to be known is omitted, so nothing is taught which it is not beneficial to know. Whatever, therefore, is declared in the Scripture concerning *predestination*, we must be cautious not to withhold from the faithful, lest we appear either to defraud them of the favour of their God; or to reprove and censure the Holy Spirit, for publishing what it would be useful by any means to suppress. Let us, I say, permit the Christian man to open his heart and his ears to all the discourses addressed to him by God; only with this moderation, that as soon as the Lord closes His sacred mouth he shall also desist from farther inquiry. This will be the best barrier of sobriety, if in learning we not only follow the leadings of God, but as soon as He ceases to teach, we give up our desire of learning.' 'I only desire this general admission, that we should neither scrutinize those things which the Scriptures have left concealed, nor reject those which are openly exhibited. For it is judiciously remarked by Augustine, that we may safely follow the Scripture, which proceeds like a mother stooping to the weakness of a child, that it may not leave our weak capacities

behind. But persons who are so cautious or timid as to wish predestination to be buried in silence lest feeble minds should be disturbed ; with what pretext, I ask, will they gloss over their arrogance, which indirectly charges God with foolish inadvertency, as though he foresaw not the danger which they suppose they have the penetration to discover? Whoever, therefore, endeavours to raise prejudices against the doctrine of predestination, openly reproaches God, as though something had inconsiderately escaped him that is pernicious to his church.' †

I have been induced to give this extract at some length, because I never met with so beautiful a description of the sober spirit in which the doctrine of election, and indeed every other doctrine, ought to be studied. And also because it shows the extreme folly of shutting our eyes against any revealed truth, for fear of its consequences. If "the man of God" would be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," he must study, with humble diligence, and receive with ready teachableness, every part of the revealed will of God. "For all Scripture is given by in-

spiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*

And thus it is, that while the doctrine of predestination is death to those who weary themselves in presumptuous disputings and reasonings about it, there always have been and will be a happy few, who humbly and sincerely feeding upon it, receiving all that the Scripture tells them concerning it, and desiring to know no further, find it health and peace to their souls. It lays them very low at the feet of their Redeemer ; brings down the high swelling of their pride and self-esteem, pulls away from under them all those broken reeds upon which they had been used to lean, self-righteousness, self-will, self-dependence : and leaves to them no one prop on which to lean for support, whilst coming up out of this wilderness, but the arm of their beloved—that everlasting arm which will surely conduct them to glory. When that arm becomes shortened that it cannot save, or weak that it cannot support ; when the arm of Jesus fails and is weary ; then they will be-

* 2 Timothy iii. 16, 17.

gin to look around for some other stay ; but not till then. Or when they can discover in themselves one single good thing which Jesus did not put there : one reason why he should visit them with such amazing love ; then they will conclude that his love took its rise from theirs ; not theirs from His. But they never will discover one such thing, so long as the Spirit of God illumines their heart, and brings to light its immense depravity and worthlessness. Therefore as God's love could not have been excited by any thing in them, they believe it to be an eternal love ; that they were called in time, because they were chosen from eternity ; and that the name of Jesus is now engraven as a seal upon their hearts, because their names were written on his heart before ever the world was. And when their thoughts stretched forward to the end of this pilgrimage, and they rejoice in the view of the mansions prepared for them in their Father's house, the crown of that rejoicing is this ; “ we got not the land in possession by our own strength, neither did our own arm save us, but thy right hand, and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou

hadst a favour unto us.”* “ Thus they rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;” for “ God is the glory of their strength, and in his favour their horn is exalted.”

I cannot pretend to meet the objections, or to refute the cavils commonly raised, when this doctrine of election is made the subject of discussion; for I did not learn it in the way of carnal reasonings, but by simply taking the Scriptures as I found them, and as the Spirit of God enabled me to receive them. If St Paul, after descanting on this subject, breaks off in an extacy of admiration, exclaiming, “ how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” we need not wonder if our shallow understandings are incapable of fathoming, our limited capacities of comprehending, our low minds of reaching them. We must be satisfied with believing that it is even so, because “ so it seemed good in our Father’s sight,”† whatever it may appear in ours. This reason, which appeared satisfactory to our Saviour, may surely satisfy us : or if not, he has vouchsafed an assurance, which may well serve to repress

* Psalm xliv. 3.

† Matt. xi. 26.

present inquiry into things too high for us. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."*

That these things are so, I believe, because I find them amongst the revealed things which belong to us and our children for ever. How or why they are so, I desire not too closely to inquire, lest I should intrude into the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God. O that he would give unto every one of us that humble and teachable spirit with which a little ignorant child is content to receive his father's lessons, without rudely commenting upon his father's ways, or rashly intruding into his father's secrets ! This one thing we know ; and with this we may be satisfied ; that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right. But it were preposterous to expect that he should always do that which is right in our eyes, so long as our notions of right and wrong are so utterly confused and perverted as they have been ever since the fall. He himself tells us that the Lord seeth not as man seeth : "and that that which is highly esteemed among men is abomi-

* John xiii. 7.

nation in the sight of God.”* It cannot be, so long as his ways are equal, and ours unequal, that his righteous dealings should be in exact accordance with our unrighteous views and sentiments. Instead then of wearying ourselves with impotent attempts to bring down his will and counsel to the level of our ideas, our far wiser way will be, to submit our thoughts and ideas to his will, assured that it is holy, just, and good. Yet since we should be ready to give a reason for every hope that is in us; I will venture to touch on some of the most hack-nied objections to this glorious doctrine, and I pray God that he will help me to show their exceeding vanity and futility.

The objection most frequently urged against the doctrine of predestination is, that it seems to charge the Almighty with injustice and caprice; for if the doom of every person be irrevocably fixed before he comes into the world, why is he punished for what he cannot help? And is it not accusing God of a strange partiality, to suppose him capable of rejecting some and choosing others, before they have done any

* Luke xvi. 15.

thing to draw down his wrath, or to conciliate his favour! Now to this objection as involving the honour of his own name; God himself has deigned to provide us with a sufficient answer. “Thou wilt then say unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay—but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?”*

The justice of God in predestination would appear sufficiently clear, if we would but take a fair and impartial view of our own state by nature: that this world is a *guilty* and *ruined*

* Rom. ix. 19, 23 Job xxxii. 12, 13, 23; xl. 2, 8.
Isaiah xlv. 9.

world ; and that every creature born into it has a sinful nature born with him, which lays him under the just and dreadful sentence of eternal death. Now, if God foreknew from all eternity, that the children of men would thus become the children of wrath—and determined from all eternity, to save a remnant according to the election of grace ; where is the injustice of this proceeding ? Is it that he did *not* determine to save *all*, instead of *some* only ? But alas ! that *all* are *not* saved, is a truth of which even the opposers of election must acknowledge their sad conviction. It is that he was influenced entirely by free and distinguishing grace, that he chose the favoured remnant *according to his own counsel and will* ; and not on account of any merit of theirs in seeking or in serving Him ? But where is the distinction of merit to be found ? It exists no where but in the distempered imagination of men. This merit, which men talk about, God cannot find ; and he has no where acknowledged its existence. For there is no difference, “ for all have sinned : ” “ all the world is guilty before God.” We know that “ the whole world lieth in wick-

edness.”* It appears then that whether we uphold or oppose the doctrine of predestination, we must agree in acknowledging that *all* men are *not saved*. And if this be the case—if God have determined to save *some* from wrath; and if, for reasons to us inscrutable, he have determined *not* to save *all*; by what motive, I ask, could his choice be directed where *all are equally guilty*; ALL, like sheep, have gone astray? where none can repent or turn to Him, unless He gives the grace to do so; and what is that but choosing them? Reason itself tells us that the scripture account of this mystery can alone be the true one—viz. “that God has mercy on *whom he will* have mercy;” “that he has compassion on *whom he will* have compassion.” That “it is *not* of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of *God that sheweth mercy*.” That God begets us of *his own will*. That the saints are *elect* according to the foreknowledge of God. That they are *predestinated* unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself; *according to the good pleasure of his will*: “being *predestinated*

* Rom. iii. 19, 22, 23. 1 John i. 10.

according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Thus much we *know* because thus much is *revealed* to us in the oracles of truth. But at this point we must stay our inquires. For we are as incapable of entering into the reasons of God's dealing with us, any farther than he has deigned to unfold them, as an infant is to enter into the counsels of a full grown man. Yes; and a great deal more so. For the one is but the difference between finite and finite—between worm and worm; but this is the difference between finite and infinite—between the worm and God.

The case, plainly stated, appears to be this. *All are sinners.* Not only so; but *all love sin*, and drink up iniquity like water. *All* say in their hearts to God—"depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."* Therefore every individual of the human race, without one single exception, is in a state of condemnation before God—a state from which he has neither the *power* nor the *will* to extricate himself. The *whole world* lieth in wick-

* Job xxi. 14.

edness—it lieth under the curse, and most justly *deserveth* the curse which God has pronounced against “*every one* who continueth not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”* The whole, therefore, of Adam’s race, considered as sinners, may be considered as, *by nature*, in a state of reprobation. But blessed for ever be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He would not display his justice in the destruction of a *whole world* of sinners. He determined to show also the riches of his glory on certain vessels of mercy, whom he had afore prepared unto glory. He chose some of those worthless and guilty things, called men, as the vessels of his mercy. He chose these children of wrath to become the children of grace. He chose them in Christ Jesus long before the foundation of the world: and, ever since the foundation of the world, he has been calling those chosen vessels (as the time appointed for each came) out from this world; giving his Son to redeem, and his Spirit to sanctify them, and himself to be their portion for ever. Does this wonderful display

* Gal. iii. 10.

of His mercy upon a part of Adam's hell-deserving race, take away his right of executing justice upon the remainder of that race? Should we say, why did he not *pardon all*, when we ought to be amazed at His mercy in not having *condemned all*? It is of his mercies that we are not all consumed: well may it be asked, who are we that we stand thus replying against God? When all are as brands *fit for the burning*: if God chose to pluck some as brands out of the fire, shall we say that this act of mercy renders less just the destruction of those who are left.

Mercy is offered to *all*, (at least in Christian lands); but such is the desperate malignity of sin, such is the enmity of the heart to God, that *all*, if left to their own *free will* (as it is called), would shut their ears and hearts against every overturn of reconciliation. God, by his special grace, opens the ears and hearts of a chosen remnant, to attend to and embrace the glad tidings of salvation. They come to Jesus, because the Father draws them; and because they come, He saves them to the uttermost. Does all this diminish the wickedness of those who do *not* come? or detract from God justice

in punishing them for not coming? He sends his Son to man with the largest proffers of mercy. His long-suffering endures them, spares them, waits upon them, till it has been proved to men and angels, that such is the perverseness of man's *will*, that he *will not* accept of life. Then He gives them over to the natural and necessary consequences of their own choice. But *all* are not thus given over; a remnant, a seed is chosen in Christ, in whom, *to show forth his own glory*, he subdues the rebellious will, takes away the natural enmity, and accepts them, not for their own sakes, but for Christ's.

To sum up what has been said, the condemnation of mankind is *a just and deserved* condemnation: the salvation of the remnant chosen out from mankind is *a free and undeserved* salvation. Every man shall have *perfect justice* done to him; and if in the case of some, justice and mercy have met together, let no one dare to murmur, for God has a right to do what he will with his own.

If, after all these considerations, the doctrine of election still seems to imply injustice and partiality in God's dealings towards us, I would

ask, is there any other scheme upon which his dealings can be made less mysterious and inexplicable? Are the difficulties which surround predestination more insurmountable than those which present themselves in every part of the providential dispensations of God? Might not the same temper which objects to the electing grace of God, carp also at his injustice and partiality in revealing to England the abundance of light and truth, while he has left so many dark places in the earth full of the habitations of cruelty? Might not such persons arrange his equity in giving to some every possible advantage of a religious education, and leaving others to every possible disadvantage of an irreligious one? Or (for there are no bounds to the presumptuous spirit of inquiry) why do they not at once take the Almighty to task for having suffered evil to get into the world at all? For it is certain that evil *has* got into the world; and its existence is, after all, the great difficulty; of which the opposers of predestination can give us no better account than the believers in this doctrine are able to do; for we know nothing but what the Scriptures have revealed to us; and if

they have not gone back to the origin of evil, the reason must be, that instruction on that point was not necessary for us.

But I stop; he that reproveth God, let him answer it. All these mysteries can be accounted for only by referring them to the inscrutable mystery of God's predestination. To the eye of carnal reason they lie involved in the thickest obscurity; but the eye of faith sees in them no darkness at all. For faith, instead of vainly striving to pull these things down to the level of reason, so far above reason; resolves every difficulty into the *gracious will* or *wise permission* of God, and *seeks to know no farther*. How many things are there which I know not, nor can by any searching find out to perfection! But *Jesus knows them all*. With this assurance I sit down fully satisfied. He will teach them to me hereafter, as I am able to bear it. In the meantime I will trust, and not be afraid. All that my God says to me I will implicitly believe, for I know that every word of God is pure. "All the words of his mouth are in righteousness: there is nothing forward or perverse in them: they are all plain to him that understandeth,

and right to them that find knowledge.”*

When I come to see God as he is, and to know as I myself am known, I shall find that all these mysteries of his word and will were only ‘dark with excessive light.’ In the meantime, till I have the eagle eye that can gaze undazzled at his glories, I will view them at humble distance through the glass of faith, which he has given me for this purpose ; nor will I dare to repine, because “I can only see them in a glass darkly.”† Thus faith removes every objection, stills every murmur, and silences every doubtful thought. I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, from a conviction that the grand reason with most people for rejecting the doctrine of election, is, *not* that they *cannot find it in the Bible*, but that being unable to reconcile it to their own *preconceived* and *imperfect* notions of equity and fitness, they come to the Bible *predetermined not to find it there*.

But another, and a heavy charge too, is brought against this doctrine : that it encourages people to continue in sin. The same charge

* Prov viii. 8, 9.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

was brought against free grace in the days of the Apostle Paul ; and is answered fully in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. See also Rom. iii. 8, 31. It cannot be denied that there are some wretched persons who turn the grace of God into licentiousness ; but *it is the grace of God* for all that, and, *as such, cannot have an unholy tendency*. We are not the less commanded to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, because some use this liberty only as an occasion to the flesh, only for a cloak of maliciousness. Such persons would suck poison and death from the very tree of life. But *real* believers in the doctrine of election, I mean those who derive their ideas on it *from the Bible only*, and measure every thing by this standard, have not so learned Christ. *They* know that “ God hath not called them to uncleanness, but to holiness.”* They know that “whom God foreknew, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son* ;”† and therefore they search themselves daily, to see whether this pure—this holy image be forming

* 1 Thess. iv. 7. † Rom. viii. 29.

has given them? In proportion then as they find their hearts panting after holiness, in that very proportion they are enabled to maintain the sweet assurance that God has chosen them to be partakers of his holiness. Thus they give all diligence to make their calling and election sure: that is, *not to make God sure* whether he *will* elect and call them; but *to make themselves sure* whether God *has* elected and called them.

Nearly allied to this objection, is one raised by many against the doctrine of election, that it either lifts men up with an over-weening arrogance and presumption; or else causes them to sink into the depths of despair. But when a poor sinful creature feels his heart running over with sorrow for sin, and desires after holiness; when his soul, once taken up with the world, is now absorbed in the love of Jesus, so as to desire nothing besides him in heaven or in earth: whether is it more arrogant to say, *I turned myself* from sin unto God; or to say, *God of his infinite mercy turned me?* To say, *I myself* sought God out and chose him, *and therefore* he accepted me; or to say, God sought *me* out because he had chosen me in Christ

Jesus before the world began; and, *therefore*, I am now enabled to seek and choose him? And as every redeemed sinner knows that the love he feels in his heart to God was none of his own implanting; for all that *he* could produce was only *enmity and more enmity*: is it so very presumptuous to conclude, that he loves God, because God *first* loved him? Rather, would it not be the height of presumption to contradict scripture and common sense, by making the opposite conclusion? And, if we allow the truth of St John's assertion, that if *we* love God, it is because he *first* loved us—whence shall we date the *commencement* of this love? Was it some sudden impulse that came into his mind *unawares and unforeknown*, as human imaginations arise? Did it begin at our birth, or spring up at the moment of our conversion? What! could not *Omniscience foreknow* the objects of his love? Must he wait till the work of his own hands is brought upon the stage of existence, before he can tell how it will turn out? or whether he is making a vessel to honour, or one to dishonour? a vessel of mercy, or a vessel of wrath? Will those, who charge believers in election with

arrogance, explain how they themselves, without the greatest arrogance, can assert that *Omniscience* cannot, or will not *foresee*; and that Omnipotence cannot, or will not *decide* the fate of *His own creatures*? For, if we love God because he *first* loved us, and if this love of His *was not from all eternity*, then there must be a time when he did *not* love us: that is, there must have been a time when either the mind of the *unchangeable God* was *different* from what it is now; or else a time when the *Almighty and All-knowing God* could not *foresee* the objects of his favour; or *was unable to make up his mind* whether he would love them or not. The difficulties, which absurdities like these present on every side, are far greater, and consequently far more dangerous, than those which attend the plain Bible truth, that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy:” and that the saints were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. As long as I have the Bible in my hand, I cannot think the thoughts and counsels of the Eternal are the mere creatures of a day; the offspring of time and chance, veering about with every

change of our most changeable hearts. I must conclude that, like their Supreme Author, they *stretch from eternity to eternity*: and it is only the belief that they were thus *from everlasting*, that emboldens me to hope that they will stand firm *to everlasting*. Again, is it more arrogant to say that God's love to us took its origin from any good thing *perceived* or *foreseen* in us; or to say that every good thing that ever has appeared, or shall appear in us, takes its origin from this infinite—this eternal—this incomprehensible love of God? I desire indeed no other account of the connexion subsisting between God's love to me, and mine to Him, than that which He has himself vouchsafed to give: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."*

How can a doctrine be said to encourage presumption and arrogance, which strips off every pretension to assist in saving ourselves, and sends us naked, empty, and helpless to the cross of Christ; leaving us no plea, except His free unmerited grace and mercy? What more

* Jer. xxxi. 3.

humbling, than a doctrine which is perpetually reminding us, “Who maketh thee to differ from another?” and “what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”* But the great charge against believers in predestination seems to be that they think *themselves* predestined to salvation, and adjudge all the rest of the world to eternal misery. God forbid! they dare not take upon themselves to judge others; yea, they judge not their own selves, except by that unerring word which God has given them for this purpose:—(of course, I only speak of sincere Christians; false professors will pervert this, as well as every other doctrine.) It is true, that many happy souls are enabled to triumph in full assurance of faith; and to say with St Paul, “Who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.”† But these, as I have before said, venture to think themselves the elect people of God, only because they find the *character* of God’s elect deeply engraven on their hearts. “They cry unto him night and day.”‡ They *love much*,

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ Luke xviii. 7.

whence arises a sure and well-founded hope that *much has been forgiven them*. But this very circumstance forbids them to despair of others. Set before them the vilest, the most hardened sinner; such a one as the righteous and moral of this world would separate from their company; and they would say, ‘But for the free mercy of my God, I had been as vile as he. Never was there a darker, or a colder, or a harder heart, than mine was by nature. If then God has shined into my dark heart, made my cold heart to burn with love, melted my heart into a willing obedience; why may I not hope that He will do the same for this poor sinner before me? Divine grace has not yet called him, but it may do so this very day: nay, who knows but God may have appointed me to be the happy, humble instrument of his conversion? Therefore I will use every means, though it may seem as hopeless as Ezekiel’s preaching to the dry bones. I will plant and water, for though *I cannot* command an increase, *God can*.* In the morning I will sow my seed, and in the evening I will not withhold my hand, for I know not which means shall prosper, this

* 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

or that, or whether my God will bless both alike.*

Thus, far from causing us to despair of the salvation of others, or to be careless in using every means of doing them good, this belief in God's electing love, is the only thing that can set us to work with any rational hope of success. For if the changing of a sinner's heart depend upon our own exertions, or upon His disposition to benefit by our persuasion; the task of addressing him will be a hopeless and a thankless one indeed. But if God have *from the beginning* chosen that sinner unto salvation, (and we have no right to infer otherwise) he has also appointed the *means* whereby this salvation shall be effected, and those means *shall be blessed*, though every human probability be against them. Let not then a doctrine be denounced as uncharitable, which excites its followers to be always abounding in every labour of love, by the certain assurance it affords them, that their labour shall not be vain in the Lord. It must not be denied that they *are* afraid to give flattering titles, or to appear

* Eccl. xi. 6.

to think well of the spiritual condition of those, in whom, as yet, they can perceive none of the things which accompany salvation. To be thus saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace, is what the world calls being very kind and charitable: but the Bible calls it “hating our brother in our heart.”* This charity, so highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God. But that love, which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in the hearts of His people, constrains them to overstep the narrow bounds of worldly kindness and courtesy. It causes rivers of waters to run down their eyes, for those who keep not God’s law. And while they weep and pray for them, they dare not but tell them of their danger. But do they urge them to despair? Far, far from it. To despair indeed of help from themselves, from every thing short of Jesus Christ; but not to despair of His willingness to receive and pardon them! They tell sinners that His arms are wide open to embrace all who come to him, and they lift up their prayers unto God, that he would make them come to Jesus. They

* Lev. xix. 17.

tell them that he is able to save to the uttermost ; that with him there is plenteous redemption ; that he waits to be gracious. Yes, they beseech them in Christ's name to be reconciled to God. Nor do they beseech the less fervently, because they know that the grace of God alone can give effect to their persuasions. Not the less earnestly do they assure sinners, that there is mercy for them, if they will but lay hold on it ; grace for them, if they will but ask for it ; grace to pardon all their sins, and to subdue them ; but not grace to pardon sin without subduing it : this they dare not say ; and therefore it is, that the very same persons who charge them with holding doctrines which tend to encourage sin, will often, by a strange inconsistency, accuse them of unnecessary strictness and moroseness in decrying the innocent pleasures of the world. As if the pleasures of a world lying in wickedness could be altogether innocent ; or as if they could afford any real enjoyment to a soul which daily quenches its thirst at a fountain of delights which the world knoweth not of—a soul possessing spiritual tastes and desires : in short, “ which is not of

the world, even as Jesus was not of the world.”*

We now come to the remaining part of the above-mentioned charge against election, viz. that it drives people to despair. A wrong and carnal view of it may ; but a right and spiritual reception of it is the surest preservative against despair. For if God is to love us for something in ourselves, sure I am, that he will never love us at all ; for in us dwelleth no good thing. But if he loves us according to his own good will and pleasure, then is our eternal happiness secure. Again, if we come to Jesus of ourselves, I see no reason to hope that we shall endure unto the end. The frailty and inconsistency of our nature render it more than probable that we shall again go away from him. And thus this everlasting love, if it depend on our conduct, must vary according to our changeable affections ; and that Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, may love us *one* day, and cast us off the next ; may be disposed this day to say to us, “ come, ye blessed of my Father,” and the very next day

* John xvii. 16.

may frown us from his presence with “depart, ye cursed.” Is not this discouraging? On the other hand, if we come to Jesus, because the Father hath given us to Jesus, and himself draws us to Jesus, then we may be assured that he will hold us fast to the end; for he who is the truth has declared that, “of all whom the Father hath given him he will not lose one, but will raise them up again at the last day.”*

When any one feels his heart drawn in strong desires after God, what can be more contrary to despair than a doctrine which teaches him to believe that he never could have been thus drawn, unless God had loved him with an everlasting love? If, indeed, believers in election professed to pry into the secrets of futurity; to open the Lamb’s book of life, and tell which names are written there, and which are blotted thence;—such unwarrantable presumption would lead to the most frightful consequences. But on the contrary, they well know that they cannot say of the vilest sinner, this man is not a chosen vessel unto the Lord; therefore they hope against hope, and strong in faith, giving glory to God, they go on, regardless of every

* John vi. 39.

discouragement, inviting sinners to come to Him, and assuring them that “ whosoever will, may come and take of the water of life freely.”*

Feebly as I have handled this intensely interesting subject, I trust I have said enough to prove that the doctrine of predestination, if we cleave simply to the Scripture statement concerning it, does not draw after it all the train of evils which have been represented as its necessary consequences; that it involves no injustice on the part of God; that it neither drives men into licentiousness, presumption, uncharitableness, nor despair. On the contrary, that a simple reception of it tends to stop every cavil against God’s justice; affords the strongest incentives to holiness and self-abasement; and is rather fitted to fill the bosom with the sweetest hope, than to render it the gloomy abode of despair.

But supposing even that no satisfactory answer could be found to these and other objections, still it is our duty as believers in the Bible ever to bear in mind that the most plausible objections against a doctrine do by no means amount to a refutation of its truth. For

* Rev. xxii. 17.

“ the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man,” and even those who are in some degree spiritual, must often feel that they are but “ fools, and slow of heart to understand” the deep counsels of God. The real question then for our consideration, as believers in the truth of God’s word, is not, whether a doctrine be liable to this or that objection; but whether it be, or be not clearly revealed in that word. If it be not a part of the will of God revealed to us in the Scriptures, then must it be utterly abhorred and rejected, though an angel from heaven were to preach it to us. But if the doctrine be plainly laid down, and strongly insisted on in the Bible, what signify objections and dreaded consequences? All that is in God’s word we are bound to receive and teach, without fear of consequences. The truths which God has not scrupled to reveal, we need not scruple to embrace; nay, we must embrace them with meekness and affection; as a part of that engrafted word which is able to save our souls. We may safely leave the consequences to Him. He is abundantly able without our help to provide against any evil results that

may ensue from a doctrine of his own revealing. Let us not seek to be wiser than God.

To conclude ; we contend not for the doctrine of election, as held by this or that particular sect ; or even as handed down to us in the strong and beautiful language of the reformers of our church ; but simply and solely as it is set forth in the very words of the oracles of God, that is, in the words of God himself. We cannot be too careful to expound our views of this doctrine, in the very words, as well as according to the exact sense of Scripture : then, if any differ, and would convince us of error, they must find some other Scriptures, in which the truths contained in ours are omitted. For let it be remembered, that as long as we keep close to the Bible, we are not answerable for the objections that may be made against the Bible. If the doctrine can be proved to be there, that ought abundantly to suffice for the conviction of those who believe that all Scripture was written by the inspiration of God. When God speaks, man's part is to submit, not to object. To oppose or deny any thing that is revealed in God's word, is to make God a liar. To cavil or murmur at it, is to rebel against God. To

be ashamed or afraid of it, is to call in question the goodness and wisdom of God in revealing it. To receive it as little children, and humbly pray for light to understand it, is the way to become wise unto salvation. Let those who profess to believe the Bible, instead of wearying themselves with carnal reasonings for and against the doctrine of predestination, meekly consult their Bibles, and see whether the doctrine be there or not. And may the Spirit of truth lead them into the saving knowledge of this and every other truth, for His mercies' sake in Christ Jesus !

It was my intention to have concluded this little treatise with a few words on the final perseverance of God's elect : but this doctrine is so clearly implied in that of predestination, that it seems unnecessary to dwell on it very largely. For it is impossible to conceive that God will cast off in time those whom He has chosen from eternity. Perseverance is a necessary consequence of predestination, and accordingly we find that the Scriptures generally mention them in connection with, and in dependence on, each other. It is thus clearly expressed in John vi. 37, 39, 44, 65, "no man can come to me except

the Father which hath sent me *draw him* ; except it were given him of my Father. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.* This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that *of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*" Again, John xv. 16, "*ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit:*" here is election : "*and that your fruit should remain ;*" here is perseverance. "Moreover, whom He did *predestinate*, them He also *called* : and whom He called, them He also *justified* : and whom He justified, them He also *glorified.*"* So then, if there be truth in God's word, those who are predestinated, are in every instance, without exception, *called, justified, and finally glorified* ; and this could not be, if they did not persevere to the last ; for he only that "*endureth to the end* shall be saved."† Indeed, how absurd, how impossible it is to separate these two truths ! For if the saints are thus elect according to the foreknowledge of God ; and if they are yet subject to fall away, and perish at the last : then is the foreknowledge

* Romans viii. 30.

† Matthew x. 22.

of God subject to fail; and his predestination or purpose from all eternity, to be frustrated.

We may therefore comfort our souls in the full assurance “that *faithful* is he that calleth us, who also will do it.” That “God is faithful, by whom we were called into the fellowship of His Son.” “Being confident of this very thing, that *He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; will confirm us unto the end*, that we may be blameless in the day of Jesus Christ;” for “*He hath declared that He will never leave nor forsake us;*” and that “He will put His fear in our hearts, that *we shall not depart from him.*”^{*} Since, therefore, the connection between these two doctrines is so close and intimate, that it is impossible to adopt the first of them, without embracing the other, we must account for every apparent final falling away after the reception of God’s grace, as the beloved apostle has instructed us to do. “They went out from us, *but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would* NO DOUBT

* 1 Thess. v. 24. 1 Cor. i. 9. 1 Cor. i. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 40, which compare with Heb. viii. 8, 10, 11.

have continued with us ; but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us."* Jesus giveth unto his sheep "eternal life ; and *they shall never perish ; neither shall any man pluck them out of his hands.*"† If then any person, after *appearing* to believe, finally die in a state of unbelief, the reason is evident : it is because they *are not, never were* of Christ's sheep ; even as Christ himself hath told us.‡ "Fear not, little flock, for *it is your Father's good pleasure* to give you the kingdom."§ But if a wolf in sheep's clothing get among the flock, it does not follow that *he* shall inherit the kingdom, nor is his coming short of it a falling away of God's elect ; but only a proof that, in spite of his specious appearance, he never belonged to them. Such-a-one's falling away is no falling from grace, but only a return to his natural propensities, "as the dog returns to his own vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."|| And thus it is whenever professors *finally* fall. Their specious

* 1 John ii. 19.

† John x. 28.

‡ John x. 26.

§ Luke xii. 32.

|| 2 Peter ii. 22.

outside was such, perhaps, as to deceive not only themselves, but even the very elect: but it could not deceive God. The Lord *knoweth* them that are his. The good Shepherd knows his sheep, and his piercing eye will find out every intruder and drive them from the fold. God is not mocked. This man was *all along* sowing to the flesh; and *therefore* it is, that he is finally left of the flesh to reap corruption.*

If we carefully examine the passages which are supposed to militate against this doctrine, we shall find that not one of them is really opposed to it; because not one of them supposes the apostate ever to have been endued with saving grace. A comparison of Heb. vi. 4—8, with the parable of the sower, may convince us that the fallers away there mentioned, are only very aggravated cases of the stony and thorny ground hearers of the parable. It is to be remarked, that St Paul does not compare them to earth, which having once drank in the rain from heaven, and brought forth good fruit, became afterwards barren and unfruitful; but he compares them to that which, unsoftened by

* Gal. vi. 8.

the rain from heaven which falls upon it, brings forth nothing but thorns and briars, as its natural and sole production. Such earth is not good ground become bad: it is bad ground which has never been made good. And it receives the curse of barrenness. The barren fig-tree is spared from year to year, till the heavenly husbandman has digged about it and dressed it: yet we are told, that if it continue barren under all these advantages, a time will come, when even Jesus will consent that it be cut down: when even Jesus, coming to the fig-tree, and beholding *no fruit*, but *only leaves*, will say in his wrath, “*Let no fruit grow on this tree henceforward for ever.*” So this ungrateful soil, on which the rain from heaven has been perpetually falling, but on which it has ever fallen in vain, shall at length be left to the consequences of its own obduracy, and no further pains bestowed upon it. And thus it was with the apostate professors of whom St Paul speaks. These had tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost; that is, partakers of his miraculous influences through the laying on of the hands of the apostles:—(for that no participation of his saving influences is here

skpoen of is evident from the 9th verse). They had “tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come:” that is, “they had heard the word, and anon with joy received it.”* Yet all this while they had none of those “things which accompany salvation.”† Their hearts were all the time like the stony ground in which the good seed takes no root; or like the ground whence the thorns and briars have never been cleared, and which must inevitably choke the good seed, and make it unfruitful. Therefore says St Paul to such false-hearted professors, *let them beware*. For after they have tried God’s patience to a certain extent, his Spirit will no longer strive with them. They are as sure to fall away, as a plant that has no root is sure to wither. And when God thus permits them to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and they are left to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; then it will be impossible for any efforts of ours to renew them to repentance; for those whom God thus leaves to themselves, will go on hardening themselves for ever. That this

* Matt. xiii. 20. † Heb. vi. 9.

is the sense of his words, is evident from the context, Heb. vi. 1—4, the meaning of which seems to be, it is of no use to be perpetually laying the foundation of your faith, and going back to the first rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, for the sake of those way-side, stony-ground, or thorny-ground hearers, in whom the good seed will never come to perfection. Let us therefore leave the first principles, and go on to perfection, for their sakes, who having received the word, and understood it, are now prepared to receive further supplies of light and knowledge; who having in them the things which accompany salvation, will go on from strength to strength.

One thing has especially struck me in this and similar passages. Amidst all the gifts and graces mentioned, *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* is never once hinted at, as having formed any part of the religion of these false-hearted professors. Yet a simple trust in Jesus is the grand evidence of our being in a state of grace. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.”* Now should these pages meet the

* John iii. 36.

eye of one of my dear Christian brethren, whose mind, from the weakness of his faith, or the strength of temptation, may be harassed by passages such as these, it is to this point of a *simple belief in Jesus*, that I would particularly draw his attention.

The sense of your weakness and helplessness fills you with dismay. You often feel that, like one of the saints of old, you are ready to halt; your feet seem almost gone; your steps about to slide. The candle of the Lord has ceased to shine upon you, and you exclaim in your haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. You look, perhaps, for gifts and graces, as evidences of your spiritual condition; but you feel that you have none to produce. Perhaps you have been a backslider from the ways of God, and have gone on frowardly in the way of your own heart. And now, all, all seems gone, save a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which, having set yourself down as the adversary of the Lord, you are daily expecting to devour you. But beloved, though in the agony of your self-abasement and condemnation, you cannot find a single spiritual grace residing within you, can you not recollect

a time *when your faith laid hold on Jesus for salvation?* when putting away all confidence in your own deservings, and casting yourself, as a miserable, guilty, and helpless sinner, at the foot of his cross, you trusted yourself unreservedly to him for pardon, righteousness and strength? If you have thus done, you have placed yourself in the hands of one who will hold you fast to all eternity. *He* will never let *you* go, though your weak and treacherous heart may sometimes seem to have let go its hold of him. Take comfort then, and encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Be assured that the false professors, to whom you would compare yourself, *never had one grain of this saving faith.* Though your faith be weak and trembling, yet be not afraid, *only believe.* For look what comfortable words our Saviour Christ speaks unto you—"this is the will of him that sent me, and every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and *I will raise him up at the last day.*"*

If you cannot feel sure that you have ever

* John vi. 40.

exercised this simple unreserved trust in your Lord and Saviour, endeavour now to commit yourself into his hands. Instead of tormenting yourself with so many vain fears, cast yourself *anew* on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, as if you had never been to him before. Fall, just as you are, into the arms of his mercy. Say unto him, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." If you can do nothing more, lie passive at his feet, until his pitying eye shall look down upon you, and his gentle hand shall raise you from the dust. Trust in him, though he slay you. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

There is another passage in Hebrews (x. 26—29), which is sometimes brought forward to prove that we may fall away, after having received the knowledge of the truth. But this knowledge is evidently no *saving* knowledge. We may receive the *knowledge of the truth*, without receiving and embracing the truth *itself*. The plain meaning of the passage seems to be, that to those who sit under the light of the gospel without benefiting by it, to them it shall be a savour of death unto death: that if when Christ has been offered, and his sacrifice made

known to us, we reject that means of salvation, there remaineth no further sacrifice for sin, “no other name under heaven by which we can be saved.”* If we will not be reconciled through Christ, God has provided no other way of reconciliation.

Neither has the passage Heb. xii. 15—17, any real difficulty in it. For Esau’s rejection of his birthright, was but the natural effect of his carelessness of the heavenly blessings contained in it. He had never really valued his birthright; it was as a pearl cast before swine, which he readily relinquished for the food suited to his swinish nature. Moreover it did but serve to justify God’s predestination concerning him: for he had declared, before even Esau was born, that the elder should serve the younger. Esau’s case, therefore, was not one of apostacy; but his conduct, in this instance, was only a consequence of his former obduracy.†

* Acts iv. 12.

† It should be remembered also, that the ‘*repentance*’ referred to a change of mind in Isaac, not in himself; compare verse 17, with Gen. xxvii. 35—40. The example has therefore no direct connexion with spiritual apostacy.

Nor does the dreadful description in 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, allude to a falling away from grace once received. For grace had never cleansed those polluted hearts. The earthly, sensual, devilish, nature, had never been, in the smallest degree, removed. This affords no instance of sheep permitted to stray everlastingly from the fold; for *these*, we are informed, were but dogs returned to their own vomit—swine, that had been outwardly washed, to their wallowing in the mire.

In Luke xi. 21, 22, we are told, that “when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh away all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil;” that is, that Satan keeps undisturbed possession of man’s heart, till Christ, who is stronger than he, forcibly ejects him thence, and himself enters into that soul, and dwells and reigns there for ever. In the 24th, 25th, and 26th verses of the same chapter, the unclean spirit is represented as voluntarily going out of a man, and afterwards returning with seven other spirits more wicked than himself; so that the last state of that man is

worse than the first. The former of these passages may serve to explain and illustrate the latter, which has sometimes been supposed to describe a state of apostacy after grace. In the first instance (*that of real conversion*), the strong man armed *keepeth* his palace, and is only driven out by the coming of "one stronger than he;" who, having possessed himself of the palace, will hold fast his blood-bought possession. Satan can never resume his dominion; because, let him come when he will to that man's heart, he finds it occupied by "a stronger than himself," who will never let him set his foot there. In other words, when Christ really takes up his abode in a soul, Satan's power over it is gone for ever. He can no longer say, 'I will return to *my house* whence I came out: for he knows that the house is now *Christ's house*, and must remain so, till Satan is stronger than Christ. But the second case described is widely different. Here the unclean spirit has secure possession of the soul; he goes in and comes out at his pleasure. He has no need to keep his palace so carefully; because he sees no one to oppose his right and title to it. He leaves the man for a time; and,

when weary of his absence, he says, 'I will return to my house whence I came out.' And mark the circumstances of his return: he findeth it "empty, swept, and garnished."* Some of its outward abominations have been cleared away during his absence: it has been swept with the broom of self-righteousness, and garnished with some fancied good works—some carnal desires or other for obtaining God's favour. But where is the "stronger than the strong man?" Who shall keep the unclean spirit out of an empty house? What wonder if, finding it thus empty, and none to oppose his entrance, he go in and dwell there with seven other spirits more wicked than himself? To divest the subject of metaphor, the soul of this man, left for a time by Satan, and subjected to some self-devised purification, may seem to himself and others to be "washed from his filthiness;"† may be adorned with a specious appearance of grace. But there is *no Christ* in that soul, and therefore there never can really have been any grace. The doors of that heart have never been lifted up to let the King

* Matt. xii. 44,

† Prov. xxx. 12.

of glory in. The man is of himself wholly without strength to resist the attack of his spiritual adversary ; and as he has never applied for help to “one that is mighty,” what wonder if Satan lead him captive at his will? This is not then the case of a soul which *having received Christ*, has fallen away from him ; but of one who has *never received Christ at all*. St Paul says, “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your ownelves : know ye not your ownelves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates ?” Now Jesus Christ was not in this man ; therefore his state, at the time of the return of the evil spirit, was not that of the elect of God ; nor need his fall be an occasion of stumbling to any who know that Christ abideth in them by the Spirit which he hath given them.

The true use of the awful passages which we have been considering, is to stir up every professing disciple of the Lord Jesus carefully to examine the state of his own soul. For these Scriptures show us how far—how very far a person may proceed in an apparently religious course, without having any of those things that *accompany salvation*. Let us not

try ourselves by any uncertain standard. Strong convictions, highly-excited feelings, fair appearances of our conduct, may exist; while all the time we have neither part nor lot in the matter: because our hearts are not right in the sight of God. But “hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”* “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”† “And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”‡ “We know that we have passed from death unto life; because we love the brethren.”§ “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.”|| We are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”¶ Has God given us this faith? Have we “a living faith.”** Does it enable us to endure, “as seeing him who is invisible?”††

* John ii. 3. † 1 John iv. 13.

‡ Gal. v. 22, 23. § 1 John iii. 14.

|| 2 Tim. ii. 19. ¶ 1 Peter i. 5.

** James ii. 26. †† Heb. xi. 27.

To “look not at the things which are seen and temporal; but at the things which are unseen and eternal?”* Does it “work by love;” “overcome the world;” “quench the fiery darts of the devil?”†

These are some of the marks which God has given us to examine ourselves by. These are things which do accompany salvation. “Every plant,” says Jesus, “which my heavenly Father *hath not planted*, shall be rooted up.”‡ Would *we* know whether we are thus planted only to be rooted up; or whether we are “trees of righteousness, *the planting of the Lord*,”§ “which shall still bring forth fruit in old age; and shall, to the end, be fat and flourishing?”|| Let us examine whether we be *filled with the fruits of righteousness which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*¶

I would, in conclusion, most earnestly beseech all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, not to dishonour their Lord by doubting of his

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

† Gal. v. 6. John v. 4. Eph. vi. 16.

‡ Matt. xv. 13. § Isa. lxi. 3.

|| Psalm xcii. 14. ¶ Phil. i. 11.

faithfulness to keep them to the end. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.”* If he loved us yesterday, he loves us to-day, and he will love us for ever; and, as long as his love to us lasts, so long will ours to him: for ours is the effect of his. As long as he loves us with an everlasting love, so long with loving kindness will he draw us; and, as long as he draws us, we shall run after him. Let us not stagger at the promises of God through unbelief; but let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God: glory to the love which first brought us out of our low estate; glory to the faithfulness which will never leave us, till it has perfected that which concerns us. And when we are assaulted by foes within and without, and hemmed in by so many dangers, that we are ready to exclaim, “I shall one day perish by the hand of the enemy;” even then let us against hope believe in hope, that the Lord shall deliver us from every evil work, and will preserve us unto his heavenly kingdom.†

Let the weak and trembling believer look well to every part of the everlasting covenant,

* Heb. xiii. 8. † 2 Tim. iv. 18.

and lay hold of the strong consolation contained in it. Let him remember who are the parties in this covenant: the trinity in unity on the one hand; and the man Christ Jesus, who is also Jehovah Jesus, appearing on behalf of the children of the covenant, on the other. For the Saints are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:”* they are admitted into the outward pale of the covenant (by the sign of baptism) “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”† and they are made partakers of the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.”‡ According to the “counsel” and “eternal purpose” of this triune Jehovah was the everlasting covenant established; “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”§ “whose counsel endureth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations;”|| “with whom is no variableness, neither

* 1 Peter i. 2.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

§ Eph. i. 5, 9, 11, and iii. 11.

|| Psalm xxxiii. 11.

shadow of turning :”* “ who changeth not :”†
 “ who is not a man that he should lie, nor
 the son of man that he should repent :”‡ “ the
 God that cannot lie :”§ “ the Lord God of
 truth :”|| “ whose word is true from the
 beginning, and every one of his righteous
 judgments endureth for ever :”¶ “ who will be
 ever mindful of his covenant :”** for he is
 “ the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and
 mercy.”†† “ A God of truth/ and without
 iniquity, just and right is he.”‡‡ This cove-
 nant-keeping God is our Father, for he is the
 “ God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,”
 the other party in the covenant ; yea, him-
 self the Surety of the covenant of peace ; our
 Surety for good. This Surety of ours has per-
 formed his part, that is, our part in the ever-
 lasting covenant. He has been “ cut off, but
 not for himself ; has made reconciliation for ini-
 quity, and brought in everlasting righteous-
 ness.”§§ Justice, by releasing our Surety from

* James i. 17.

† Mal. iii. 6.

‡ Num. xxiii. 19.

§ Titus i. 2.

|| Psalm xxxi. 5.

¶ Psalm cxix. 160.

** Psalm cxi. 5.

†† Deut. vii. 9. 1 Kings viii.

23. Neh. i. 5. Dan. ix. 4.

‡‡ Deut. xxxii. 4.

§§ Dan. ix. 24, 26.

the prison of the grave, and permitting him for ever to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, has proclaimed herself fully satisfied, and unable to claim from him or from us one jot or one tittle more in the way either of doing or of suffering.* “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”† And he is able to “save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them:”‡ and that the Father “heareth him always.”§ He is gone “to appear in the presence of God for us;”|| to be our advocate with the Father;¶ our “High Priest over the house of God.”** Moreover “it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:”†† and “out of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”‡‡ “All the promises” of the covenant

* Rom. iv. 25.

† Rom. viii. 34.

‡ Heb. vii. 25.

§ John xi. 42.

|| Heb. ix. 24.

¶ 1 John ii. 1.

** Heb. x. 21.

†† Col. i. 19.

‡‡ John i. 16.

“in Him are yea, and in Him, amen:”* for God hath declared that “his covenant shall stand fast with him.”† “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from thenceforth and for ever.”‡ Thus “ordered in all things and sure”§ is the everlasting covenant which God hath made with his people. It was “confirmed of God in Christ before the world was:”|| confirmed by the promise and oath of God; those two “immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie:”¶ and being thus confirmed, “none shall ever disannul, or add to it.”** “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David”†† (i. e. David’s Lord, as is evident from the context). “I

* 2 Cor. i. 20.

† Psalm lxxxix. 28.

‡ Isa. lix. 21.

§ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

|| Gal. iii. 17, and Eph. i. 4.

¶ Heb. vi. 17, 18.

** Gal. iii. 15.

†† Psalm lxxxix. 34, 35.

will make an everlasting covenant with them, that *I will not turn away from them to do them good*" (here is *God's faithfulness*) "but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,"* (here is *our perseverance*.) "The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."† "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:"‡ and how sure those mercies are, may be seen from Jer. xxxiii. 20, 26. "Thus hath the Lord sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend is his name."§ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! The whole earth shall be full of thy glory! Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!

That blessed child of the covenant, Hooker, has expressed his faith in the final perseverance of God's elect in terms so beautiful and glorious,

* Jer. xxxii. 40. † Isa. liv. 9, 10.

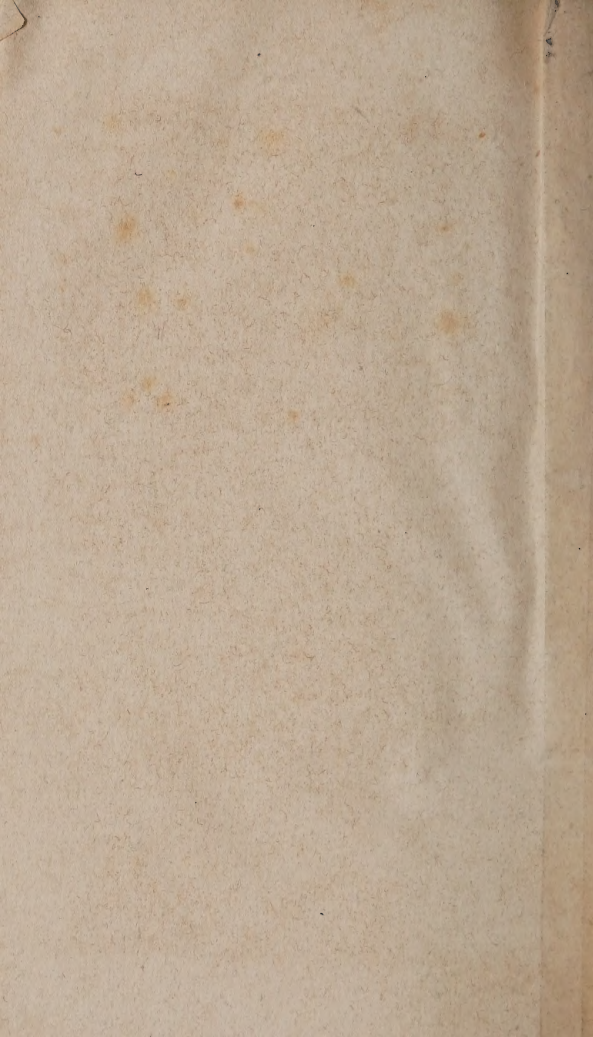
‡ Isa. lv. 3.

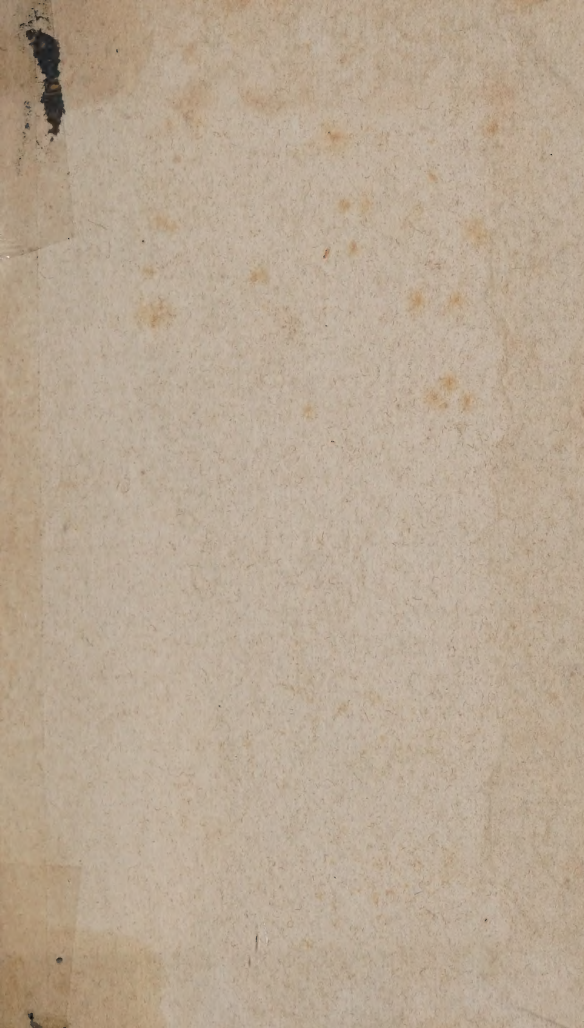
§ Psalm cxi. 9.

that I cannot close this little work without inserting them. “Blessed for ever and ever be that mother’s child, whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heavens may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, and the stars their glory ; but concerning the man that trusted in God, if the fire have proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head, if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have as it were religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man ; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him ? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God ? *Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? No ; I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other*

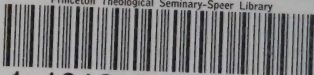
creature shall ever prevail so far over me. I know in whom I have believed ; I am not ignorant whose precious blood has been shed for me ; I have a shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power ; unto him I commit myself ; his own finger hath engraved this sentence in the tables of my heart, Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not : 'Therefore the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep, as a jewel, unto the end ; and by labour, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I shall keep it.'"

THE END.





Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01019 3474